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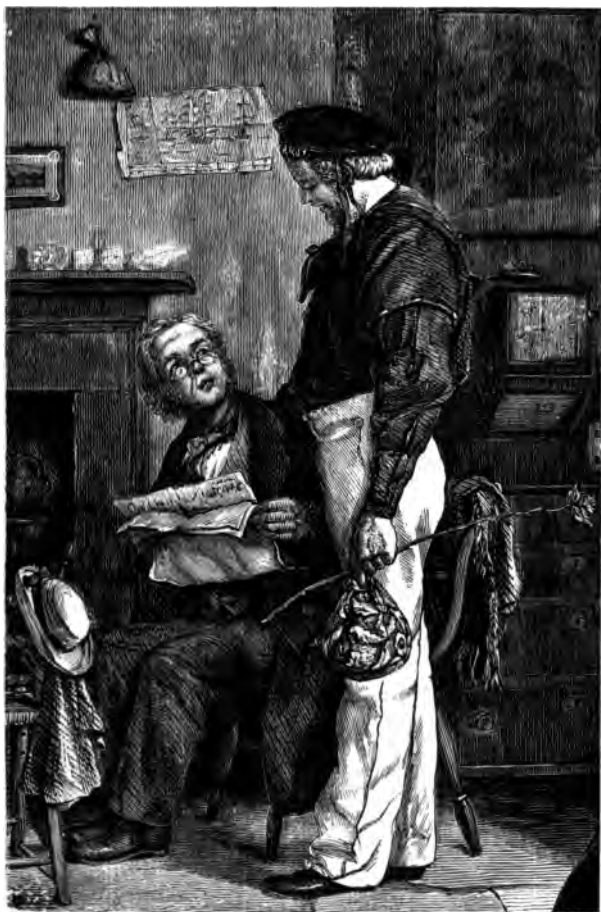




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Uncle John was just sitting down to business, and, contrary to my expectation, he seemed pleased to see me.

p. 130.

NOW OR NEVER:
THE TRIALS AND PERILOUS ADVENTURES
OF
FREDERICK LONSDALE.

An Autobiography.

BY
CHARLES A. BEACH,
AUTHOR OF "LOST LEONORE," "LEFT TO THE WORLD," ETC.



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NOW OR NEVER:

THE TRIALS AND PERILS OF FREDERICK LONSDALE.

CHAPTER I.

MY UNCLE JOHN.

I NEVER knew a mother's care. She died when I was about three hours old.

My father, who was a barrister, with a good Parliamentary connection, died in London when I was in my sixteenth year, leaving me about ten thousand pounds in the hands of his brother as guardian and trustee.

John Lonsdale, my uncle, was a solicitor and a money-scrivener—a man who from childhood had taken such good care of his own money that my father had no hesitation in trusting him with what was to be mine.

Notwithstanding his profession, Uncle John was always esteemed an honest man; that is, he took as much by way of interest and costs as the law allowed, but made it a point to have his bills taxed by the Master, who, as he knew, always considers that a lawyer should be well paid for his work. He was conscientious in looking after his own, and had prospered so well in business, that in my father's opinion my money could not have been placed in better hands for safe keeping.

This may not have been my opinion, for I had a notion that money in his keeping might be a little too safe. I had no right, however, to think that my father had done wrong, for he had been acquainted with Uncle John much longer than I had.

After my father's funeral, I was sent back to school, where I remained a little more than a year longer. A circumstance then occurred that caused me to take a sudden departure for London. I disobeyed what, in the opinion of the principal, was an important rule of discipline, and it was fully evident to me that I should be subjected to the degrading consequences before the whole school the next morning.

Instinct, or something else, told me that no person had ever been made better by being publicly flogged, reprimanded, or in any way disgraced before his fellows. Indeed I thought that there was but little use in my trying to win the respect of others, after losing respect for myself.

There is a difference between proper pride, and vanity; and in trying to subdue the latter, the first should not be humbled. By a private reprimand from the principal, whom I respected, my vanity might have received a wholesome check in its development, and pride would have assisted me in refraining from future transgression. This, however, was not in accordance with the discipline of the school, so I resolved to leave without more ado; for "I cannot always stay here," thought I, "and perhaps there will never be a better occasion for leaving than the present. I must not always remain a creature of circumstances, but must have a will of my own. I must act, and do so *now or never*."

I reached London that evening. My uncle was a bachelor, having chambers opening upon a view of the trees and greensward of Lincoln's Inn Fields. My first call was upon him.

"What are you here for?" he asked, in a sharp tone, when I entered his office the next morning. "Have you been kicked out of the school for *good* behaviour?"

"No," I replied, "but I have left to save the principal the trouble of kicking me out."

"That's right, my lad," said he, in a milder tone; "you should always save people all the trouble you can; but why did you not think of that before coming here to trouble me?"

"I am not going to trouble you long," I replied; "for if you will give me some money I will leave. I want to go to a larger school than the place I have left. I want to see the world. That is the school for a youth. I shall have plenty of time to complete

my mathematics and my classical studies when I have nothing better to do."

"You are a bright, sharp youth, Fred," said the old gentleman, "but it's a pity you don't know something."

"Yes, that's what I think, uncle, and I want to go where that something can be learnt. Will you give me some of my money?"

"No, I cannot. Your money is all invested in a manner that prevents me from withdrawing it until you are of age. I cannot let you have more than enough to pay your expenses at school. Your money can only be used for that purpose at present, and for no other."

"Then lend me some of your own. You are a money-scrivener, so why not accommodate me as well as others? You know that I can repay you some time."

"Now you are talking business, Fred; but how is that to be done? Don't you know that I find money upon securities alone, and that as a minor, any bond of yours would be only so much waste-paper? Now if I advance you the money, I run the risk of losing it; but suppose I were to take that risk, I must then charge you the same as other money-lenders,—say twenty per cent.,—and your principal is all locked up in the Three per cent. Consols."

"I don't care what I pay for the money," I replied, "if I can only get it. Let me have five hundred pounds, and charge for the use of it what you like."

At this want of regard for the future, the desire of sacrificing everything for the present, and the want of all business qualifications he so highly valued himself, the old gentleman seemed much displeased.

"Frederick Lonsdale," he said, "had your father left his hard-earned money to some charitable institution, he would have done his country some good,

and the person most benefited by the act would have been his son. You would have been compelled to work for a living, and might have learnt to be industrious, careful, and economical; but as it is, your youth and money will be squandered, and you will probably go to an early grave, perhaps glad to escape from the miseries of life. Will you go back to school?"

"Never," I replied.

"Very well; I will not urge you, for I do not wish to see your father's only boy disgraced. So, on the terms I have mentioned, I will advance the sum you ask for."

I signed some papers which he placed before me, without reading them, and he then handed me, in the presence of one of his clerks, who had been sent to his banker's for them, bank-notes for five hundred pounds.

John Lonsdale bade me "good-bye" without asking whither I was going, or when I should return. He was a sensible man,—one who knew that I should be sure to come back when my money was spent—a man who never troubled himself about the affairs of other people by asking inquisitive questions, that one might not wish, or perhaps not be able to answer.

Was he an honest man? Young and foolish as I then was, a doubt crossed my mind of the propriety of his conduct in so readily granting me the whole control of so much of my father's hard-earned money. It had been placed in his care for safe keeping until I was old enough to make some good use of it, yet, for the sake of doing a good and safe stroke of business, he had broken the trust confided to him by my father. However, my father's wishes were so far disregarded by myself that I had no reason to find fault with my uncle for having neglected his duty.



CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST TOUR.

A few days were required in preparing for a journey, and in deciding to what part of the world it should be taken. I did not wish to act without some apparent reason. It was necessary that I should see something of the world. The time for doing so was the present, and not when the duties and responsibilities of manhood were upon me. I should have something else to do then.

I had read the voyages of Anson, Cook, and others—men of undying fame—and the ambition was mine to achieve a similar greatness. Like them, I determined to make the voyage round the world; but, like them, in the voyage I must be first, or my ambition

would achieve no more fame in circumnavigating the globe than that of any of those able seamen who had accompanied either of those celebrated navigators. *Aut Caesar aut Nullus* should be my motto, come of it what might. Three days after receiving the bank-notes from my uncle, I met a young friend who had been for a few months a schoolfellow. He was by two years my senior, and had left the school more than a year ago. There he had taken but little notice of me, but he was so delighted at seeing me now that he declared we should pass the day together.

Frank Banks was an agreeable companion. For a youth of eighteen he had seen a good deal of London, and was kind enough to devote some time and trouble in introducing me to many of the ways and resorts of people, whom he called "men of the world"—men who had learnt to live at the rate of twenty-one days a week, and who saw more of "life" in a month than most dull, plodding people see of it in all their lives. He professed to be a medical student enjoying his vacation, as the schools were then closed. I made known to him my future prospects and intentions, and in return he gave me the light of his wisdom.

"It's all very well to see distant lands," said he, "but not until after one has seen something of one's own country. Now suppose you were to visit America, and were questioned about men, manners, and things in general of London, you could only be wise in confessing ignorance, and in returning here again as quickly as possible. Knowledge of the world is only acquired by a systematic pursuit in search of it. Leave nothing worth gathering." These words seemed worthy of consideration, and it occurred to me that if some other

than a schoolboy knowledge of my native land was worth acquiring, it should be obtained *now or never*.

A week passed in which, conducted by Banks, I visited many places of amusement, and became every evening more or less confused by too freely indulging in wine and cigars. We visited two sparring-rooms, and witnessed what was called a "brilliant" and "sharp set-to" in each of them. We went to a rat-pit and saw some small dogs kill rats in a "lovely manner," as Banks called it. We went to a well-known casino close to the Haymarket, and danced half the night in an atmosphere laden with perfume. We visited places where money was lost to card-sharpers and betting-men; but in all this excitement and hard work in mixing with what Banks called "life," I was disappointed. The thing did not come up to my expectations, which had been pitched too high. This confession was made to my companion.

"I am going over to Paris next month," said he, "and I wish you could wait and go with me. I could show you something of the world there. I agree with you that life in London is rather tame for people of our respective ages. It may please boys, but we require something stronger. You must wait until next month, and go over to the Continent with me."

From all I had heard and read, I believed that Paris was worth seeing, and was not disinclined for the excursion he proposed, but I did not like to wait.

"Why can't you go now as well as next month?" I asked.

"Because my quarter's allowance don't fall due until then," he replied, "and I can't afford to go before. In fact, I am rather short of money now, and have been for several days, as you must have noticed."

I certainly had noticed the fact to which he called my attention, for he had allowed me to pay nearly all expenses since we had been together.

"Never mind your allowance," said I, "we will go to Paris at once. I have plenty of money, and you can pay me what is right after we come back."

This offer was accepted, and we prepared for starting the next day by purchasing the usual articles with which tourists generally encumber themselves. This, Banks said, was necessary to make us look "the thing." Memory, however, tells me somewhat seriously that two more conceited snobbish Cockneys than Banks and myself never entered Paris. As Britons we claimed the right to dress and act as we pleased, leaving to others the necessity of gaining respect by their conduct.

My visit to the capital of the French is one of the things of the past for which I have no regret. By that visit many early prejudices were removed,—my mind was expanded, and my respect for man and his Creator enlarged.

We visited the Louvre, the Bibliothèque Impériale, the Jardin des Plantes, with its splendid museum of natural history, and the animated scenes of the Boulevards in the evening.

For the first time in my life I was in a place where I saw no drunken men or women, and where I saw nothing but politeness in the manners of that class which in London was far from being as perfect as it might be. It was where I first saw the lower classes of society amusing themselves in a rational manner, and where they drank coffee as it should be.

We stayed in Paris two weeks, and then went to that city of offensive odours, Cologne, the city where Cor-

nelius Agrippa and Rubens were born, and where Marie de Medicis died.

I did not like Cologne, with its narrow, gloomy, winding streets and ill-constructed buildings.

With the latter, however, I must not include the Cathedral of St. Peter, which has no rival in the world, even among our own cathedrals, and after which Notre-Dame would have to be placed a long way down in the list.

Before being three weeks from London I became weary of the society of my companion. Frank Banks at that time was in every sense of the word a Cockney, and I began to get weary of his company. His mind was not a fountain from which ideas were ever flowing, but it was like a book easily read and from which no more could be learnt. I determined on returning to London, and he reluctantly accompanied me.

•



CHAPTER III.

A DAY ON THE RIVER.

BANKS was very fond of boating. The annual University boat-race had given him the idea that rowing was what he called "the thing," and the day after our return to London he succeeded in getting me into a small boat on the river.

For more than an hour he laboured hard at the sculls in pulling the boat up the stream, and apparently was in a high state of enjoyment over his work.

I was never in a boat but once or twice before, and was awkward: our school was not near a navigable river or even a canal. All boys should learn to manage a boat. While looking down from Cuckoo Weir at Eton at the boats, after his return from Waterloo, the Iron Duke told Provost Goodall, whose guest he then was, that to boating and cricket that great victory was due,—muscle and nerve gained the day.

As we were turning about in the wake of a steamer, the boat commenced rocking in what I thought a dangerous manner.

In trying to assist the boat with the weight of my body in maintaining its equilibrium, I fell over the side head foremost. Before getting fairly into the

water, Banks caught hold of my feet and held them firmly with my shins on the edge of the boat. In the position in which I was held it was impossible for me to get my head above water, being unable to catch hold of anything with my hands to assist me in getting it above the surface. I was perfectly helpless, hanging with my head downwards, and Banks undoubtedly thought that he was saving my life—that as long as my boots were dry there was no particular danger—yet unable to pull me in, or rather out, he was drowning me. Had he let go my feet, after becoming completely immersed, I could have put them down and brought my head above water, but he held them with a firmness that defied every effort to extricate myself.

I could swim a little—enough to have saved myself if allowed freedom to do so—but in the position in which I was held, nothing could be more helpless. I could not speak and bid him let me go, and he seemed wholly insensible as to the danger I was in.

Had he wished to drown me a more effectual plan could not have been taken than the one he was so persistently pursuing. It was impossible for me to free my feet. Banks had hold of both ankles, and was pressing my shins upon the narrow edge of the boat with all his force. He did not appear to be trying to pull me in, and a horrible conviction flashed across my mind that he intended to drown me. “Unless this is his object,” I thought, “why should he take the only plan to prevent me from doing something towards saving myself?”

These thoughts and a thousand others flashed across my mind with the rapidity of lightning. I seemed a long time in the position I have described, and my

agony each moment became more intense. It soon became too great for further thought. I only knew that I was dying, and in a moment more that knowledge left me. I was insensible. All consciousness of pain had passed, and I had reached the realization of Buddhism,—the *Nirvana*,—the repose from the agony of life.

The possession of this so-called state of happiness did not last long, for I was again brought to a realisation of the miseries of an existence. I was in the parlour of a river-side tavern, stretched on a table. Several people were standing around me, and amongst them was the doctor who had succeeded in restoring me to animation.

My companion, Banks, was also present, much pleased at my recovery. Later in the day I learnt all. A man who happened to be in a boat on the river, and close by at the time I was drowning, saw the real position of affairs, and pulled up just in time to save me. Before reaching us he shouted to Banks several times to let me go, but my companion, as though certain that I should be lost if my feet became wet, retained his hold.

So enraged was my rescuer at his stupidity, that on coming within reach he gave Banks a blow on the side of his head with his oar that sent him to the bottom of the boat nearly insensible.

After again becoming able to attend to what Banks called "business," I was more than ever determined to cut his acquaintance as soon as I had obtained from him his share of the expenses of our excursion.

A circumstance soon after occurred that separated us before I had the pleasure of seeing the colour of his money.



CHAPTER IV.

AN ACQUAINTANCE DISCARDED.

Soon after our return to London I accompanied Banks one evening on a visit to some of his fellow-students.

The most of them had but just come up from the country after a month's holiday, and they had all met in the parlour of a small public-house in the Euston Road to welcome each other's return. There was nothing in the conduct or conversation of these students to change an opinion I had often heard expressed of medical students in general—an opinion not much to their credit. The principal rivalry that appeared amongst them was that of trying to outdo each other in the use of bad language.

Before the company separated my companion, Banks,

made a speech that was apparently approved of by all, for it was answered with cheers.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have a pleasant communication to make. Our friend, Mr. Lonsdale, is about to leave the Old World for the New ; but previous to his departure he wishes to have a jollification with his friends, and all of you are invited to dine with us at the Star and Garter at Putney, on Thursday next, at six o'clock. A boat, chartered by my friend for your use, will leave Westminster Bridge, at four o'clock, sharp, and he and I will meet you on board. I hope that it is not necessary for me to urge upon you the duty we owe to one about to leave us, and that each of you will attend and do all in your power towards making such a time of it as will give him pleasant memories of his native land when far away."

This speech was received with much approbation, and all, except one, promised to give up previous engagements and attend the dinner.

There had not been one word said between Banks and myself about the entertainment to which he had invited his fellow-students, and after leaving the room I ventured to hint that such was the case.

"My dear Fred," he exclaimed, "how could I consult you on the subject when I never thought of it myself until the moment before it was proposed?"

"But those students are not my friends. I have never met them before, and am not even acquainted with them beyond our present meeting."

"I know that, but I want you to become better acquainted with each other. They are a set of jolly good fellows whom you should know. A few years hence, when you are settled in life, they will be respectable members of good society, each having an

extensive practice in his profession. The dinner will not cost you more than three fivers, or, at most, four, including the boat. A happy thought of mine—that outlay of twenty pounds is a good investment.”

“But I don’t know anything about giving dinners,” said I, “and never gave a dinner in my life. I don’t even know where the Star and Garter is.”

“Don’t give yourself the least trouble about that,” said Banks, “for I’ll row up to Putney to-morrow, and take upon myself all the arrangements. I’ll give the landlord full instructions. You shall have no trouble. I understand the business, and shall take care that a dinner given by *my* friend shall be a respectable affair, and do us both credit.”

He now assumed the air of having settled the business, and I said no more. Banks had a home somewhere in one of the streets leading out of the Strand, and about two o’clock on the Thursday afternoon, when the dinner was to come off, he left me to go home and dress for the occasion.

“I shall be on board the boat by half-past three, sharp,” said he, “and you must not be one minute later. We must both be there to receive *our* friends when they arrive.”

My dislike for Banks had been growing stronger and more fierce for several days. I did not like the idea of a dinner being given to his friends at my expense without my being consulted on the subject before the general invitation to the feast was made. In fact, I had not been invited to the dinner at all. He had merely commanded me to attend, and that command was only given at the moment of his departure, and for the reason that I had the money to pay the bill.

"I must cut his acquaintance," thought I, "and now is the time. Yes. *Now or never!*"

My luggage was packed immediately, my bill paid, a cab called, and I was driven to the London Bridge railway station, and when Banks and *his* friends met on board the boat, I was dining comfortably by myself at the Queen's Hotel at Norwood, where, for a time, I took up my quarters.

I was young then, and knew no better than to act in the manner I had done; but Banks should have been told some days before that I would have nothing to do with the dinner, and that I wished the acquaintance between us to cease. This would have been getting clear of him in an honourable manner. I can understand this now, but could not then, and the affair, floating in memory like a buoy in a harbour, shows me now what should have been avoided.



CHAPTER V.

OFF AT LAST.

LIFE in London, such as I had seen, was not much to my mind ; and my present semi-rural retreat gave me plenty of time for thought, so I resolved to carry out my original plan without further delay, and visit some foreign land. More money was wanted for this purpose, and I again called on Uncle John.

"What ! back again ?" he exclaimed on seeing me. "I had hoped by this time that you were half way on the road to Timbuctoo. What have you been doing ?"

I told him.

"And what has brought you here now ?" he asked.

"The want of money. I am going to America, and *have not enough to go with.*"

"Experience is a dear school," said Uncle John, "but there are some folks who can learn in no other, and you are one of them. How much money do you want?"

"Five hundred pounds."

"On the same terms as the other?"

"Yes; any terms you please."

Again the clerk was sent to my uncle's bankers, I signed something I never read, my uncle handed over to me bank-notes for £500, and we parted merely with the words "good morning."

The world was before me with £700 to view it with.

The show might have been worth more money, but I did not think so at the time, and was quite confident that, with the money in my pocket, I could acquire such fame as a traveller that even Munchausen himself, if alive, might envy.

I should never be able, as an old man, to tell my grandchildren that I had been round the world, and speak the truth, without having first visited America, and so to some part of that continent I resolved to go. I was not particular where, for any part of it was far away from my native land, and part of the journey round the world.

Most people would have gone to a shipping-office and paid their passage to some port of America. I did not do so, for that, I thought, would be too unromantic in starting on a voyage of discovery. First I went to the Docks, as all foolish boys do when smitten with a desire for "a prison, with the chance of being drowned." There I got into conversation with a person who confirmed me in the belief of many previously half-formed opinions. He told me that the majority of passengers in the

steamers to the Northern States were dirty emigrants, agents of "Brumagem" merchants, and inquisitive Yankees returning home, and that if I wished to go to America as a gentleman, as my appearance indicated, I ought to go in a sailing vessel to New Orleans. He told me that on steam-ships there were no sailors, that the crew was composed of coal-heavers, and a few land-lubbers to clean the decks, but "Jack" never joined them.

"Go over in a sailing vessel," said he, "in a ship where you can see the beauty of a craft under full sail in a wholesale and wholesome breeze, and not in a tea-pot, like the steamers.

His advice seemed so good that I resolved to have a little more of it, and I asked him to dine with me, and then to show me a sailing vessel about to start for New Orleans.

"You're in luck, my lad," he replied to this request, "for there's a fine ship there lying off the Tower Stairs that will positively sail to-morrow." He pointed to a vessel lying at the wharf on which we were standing. "You can pay your passage at Smith and Co.'s, Leadenhall Street," he continued, "and I advise you to do so immediately."

When we had discussed our steak and stout, and had imbibed what my companion called a stiff glass of grog, in the excitement of the moment, and urged by the fear of being too late, I walked at a sharp pace to Leadenhall Street, and paid my passage-money. The rest of the day was passed in purchasing an outfit for the voyage, and early the next morning I went on board with all my luggage.

The vessel was still lying off the stairs, and freight was being put aboard. There was no more appear-

ance of her sailing soon than there was on the day before. The steward came to me, and, pitying my simplicity, informed me that, being a saloon passenger, I ought not to have come aboard until after receiving a notice from the captain that the vessel was about to start. I ought to have left my address at the office where the passage was paid, but in place of that I had acted like a common steerage passenger, and had come on board at least twenty-four hours too soon.

This was worth learning, as was also the fact that sailing vessels seldom start on the day named in the advertisements. After twenty-four hours of tedious delay, the ship was towed down the river to Gravesend, and we were off.

One of the first persons I noticed as belonging to the ship was the individual who had advised me to take a passage in her. He was the first mate, and was addressed by his brother officers and the crew as Mr. Ransom.

I had a slight suspicion of having again been done, but being a little indifferent as to what part of America I first visited, or in what manner the voyage was made, I was not much annoyed at the fact of my being a "muff," enticed aboard the vessel by the representations of one of its officers.

If I reached New Orleans in the vessel, there would be something realised for my passage-money, and I was philosopher enough to be satisfied.



CHAPTER VI.

WRECKED.

THE ship in which I had embarked for New Orleans was a huge tub engaged in the cotton trade. The owners knew about what time the cotton crop would be ready in New Orleans for transportation to Europe, and their vessel was annually despatched about three months in advance of that time for a cargo. The

vessel could hardly be said to sail. A haystack in the water will move before the wind, and so did this ship.

Fortunately, the wind favoured us, and we reached the southern point of Florida sixty-one days after leaving London, having been some four weeks longer in making that distance than any ordinary vessel would have been with the same winds. While off Key West we were struck by a heavy gale from the south.

We were close in upon the land, and every effort was made that men could to get away from it. The ship answered no more to the action of the rudder, than a hungry shark would give to the prayers of a swimming sailor. She would neither "wear" or "stay," but seemed endowed with the swinish attribute of obstinacy. She would move side-ways quite as fast as in any other direction.

The captain, and the first officer, Mr. Ransom, I believe were both good seamen. Their orders were promptly given, and obeyed with goodwill by the crew. Good seamanship, however, was of no avail aboard the vessel under, or rather not under, their command. Each moment we could see that she was drawing nearer the land which they were so anxious to avoid. As a last resort the anchors were dropped, but either there was not sufficient chain out or the anchorage was bad, for the vessel continued on her journey for the shore.

She could do nothing else but move before the gale. Art could not make her deviate one point of the compass from the direction in which the storm was moving.

The keel soon struck against the rocks, and the

top-masts went over to the leeward. This was just as the sun was setting, and a black night came over the scene, leaving us the almost certain prospect of death in the dark. About one-quarter of a mile to the leeward the sea was madly dashing on the shore, which all of us could never reach alive. As wave after wave was hurled against and over the vessel her "bones" began cracking, and there was no hope of her keeping together more than a few hours longer.

With much difficulty a boat was launched, and several hastened forward to enter it. I looked over the side and saw the boat tossing up and down in a manner that seemed impossible for any one to remain in it. Should I leave a place where for awhile I was safe, to encounter immediate danger in the boat? The ship would never gain the shore, and I could not swim well enough to reach it. I should have to be transported in some way from the ship to the land or die.

Now was the time while others were getting into the boat. "If I make an effort to save myself," thought I, "it must be done *now or never*;" but I could not command the resolution to make the attempt. The certainty of living but a few minutes longer seemed worth more than the chance of a long life to be purchased by incurring the risk of immediate death.

The boat laden with several of the crew was pushed off, and the next instant they were wildly struggling in the sea, for the boat had capsized. Not long after a heavy sea struck the ship and took away part of the bow, leaving the other part buried in water.

"Ransom!" I heard the captain exclaim to the first mate, "what can we do?"

"Nothing at present," answered the mate, "nothing but wait."

"Wait, for what?"

"For death, that's all," answered Mr. Ransom, in a tone that seemed to infer that there was something in that word that would save us.

Amongst the crew was a young Maltese sailor, to whom my attention was called by seeing him divesting himself of his clothing. When completely stripped, he disappeared over the side.

Seas were now constantly breaking over the wreck, and nothing kept the vessel from sinking but the rocks on which she had struck. To keep from being washed away some of the crew mounted the rigging. The captain and mate remained on the quarter-deck, and thinking they must know how to protect their lives from danger as long as possible, I remained with them.

I had not sufficient sense to see that pride might not allow them to leave the deck for the sake of prolonging an existence of fear for a few moments. Although a bad sea-vessel and a slow sailer, the ship had been built in a substantial manner, and was a long time in breaking to pieces. Wave after wave was hurled against her, yet the greater part of the ship held together.

From the position in which the vessel was lying, the heavy part of the seas rolled over the bow, yet there was force enough in the waters that swept the stern to place us in much danger. A heavy sea struck the ship, making a concussion as though it had been hit by a thunderbolt. The captain was within a few feet of me, and—above the roaring of the angry elements and the complaints of the masts and timbers—I heard his voice as he shouted "Look out!"

I seized a part of the standing rigging as a heavy wave came upon us. My feet were swept from under me, and, for a moment, I was swung over the side of the vessel. When my feet again touched the deck I saw that the bulwarks were gone and only Mr. Ransom was near me.

The captain had been carried over. Not till then did I begin fully to realise our danger, and an indescribable feeling of mental pain came over me. It was fear—genuine fear ; not a childish fancy.

“Mr. Ransom,” I asked, “is there no hope? Can’t we be saved?”

“I am afraid not,” he replied ; “we must die. The ship will soon go to pieces. Are you ready for death?”

I was certainly not willing to die ; perhaps conscience told me plainly that I was not prepared. But a minute or two before this question was asked me I was trying to obtain some consolation from the fact that if I were to be lost Mr. Ransom would, in all probability, not be saved. He had persuaded me to take a passage in the vessel, and deserved to share my fate in the voyage.

I was trying to dismiss this feeling from my mind when I was surprised at seeing a man reach the deck by one of the many ropes hanging over the side. It was the Maltese sailor who had left us an hour before. He told us that he had safely reached the shore, but that as he did not like to remain alone shivering in the breeze, which was colder than the water, he swam back to bid us good-bye.

There was not a man on the wreck but what would have given all we can hope for in this world for the opportunity of once more placing his foot upon land, and yet “Tony,” the Maltese, after having safely landed, had come back to pay us a visit.

"Here are three sovereigns, Tony," said Mr. Ransom, taking a purse from his pocket. "I shall certainly never want them, and you may."

Tony took the purse, shook hands with us, and again went over the side.

I could swim a little, but had no hope of being able to reach the shore in a heavy sea, and land safely through the surf without assistance. Tony might assist me—that was my only chance.

"*Now or never*," thought I, as I hastily kicked off my boots and threw aside the greater part of my clothing. I had been afraid to leave in the boat, but the loss of the captain from the deck had shown me the danger of remaining. Catching hold of a line, I let myself down into the water, and at the same time shouted "Tony! Tony!"



CHAPTER VII.

LANDED.

I HAVE said that I was able to swim a little; but on finding myself tossed about by an angry sea the art seemed to have left me. I could do nothing but struggle for the surface when buried by a wave.

Tony had heard my calls and turned back. He seemed to move in the water as easily as a fish. "It's no good," said he, as he drew near; "you will die. Why you no stay on deck and pray?"

I struck out towards him; but, going under a sea, he moved further away. He was afraid to come

within my reach, no doubt in fear that I should prevent him from saving himself by clinging to him.

I now regretted having left the wreck. Tony would not assist me, and I could not possibly swim ashore. This regret came too late; for, although but a few yards from the vessel, I felt wholly unable to reach her again.

I must die. I was constantly being thrown up and down by the waves, and wholly unable to understand the manner in which the Maltese could make any progress to or from the shore. This mystery was afterwards explained to me. He allowed the waves to pass over him, diving through each as it rose, and thus made a straight course, instead of becoming exhausted by being tumbled about.

He had not deserted me. The roof or top of the galley that had been swept from the deck was near, and pushing it within my reach, he bade me cling to it. In the raft on which I immediately placed myself, was a hole through which the stove pipe had passed. This afforded me the means of clinging to my support, and my voyage towards the shore was slowly commenced.

Sea after sea rolled over me, nearly tearing my arms off as I clung to the raft. To retain my hold on the boards under me was my only chance of preservation, and I grasped them with quite as much energy as Banks had used in holding my feet on the edge of the boat a few weeks before.

Hours passed away, hours of one ceaseless violent struggle in keeping possession of the raft. Each wave seemed an agent sent for the express purpose of tearing it from my grasp. I could feel that my hands were blistered and bleeding, and my arms seemed

drawn out to twice their natural length. Nearly half the time I was buried in the water, and often a minute of intense agony would pass, without the possibility of breathing. So fierce was this struggle for life that several times was I tempted to relinquish my hold, and allow my sufferings to end in the soft embrace of the sea. Instinct, however, was superior to will, and as each wave dashed upon me it seemed to thunder in my ears "*Now or never!*" and I clung to the raft with the desperation and energy that defied the restless power of the waves to take me away.

When the grey light of morning appeared, the roaring of the waves, as they dashed on the shore, became louder, and I knew that my fate would soon be decided. The greatest danger had yet to be passed. To live I must land through the surf. This would be no easy task. Without assistance the chances were that my dead body would be dashed and rolled about for many hours on the strand.

Tony had left me to my fate—a fate that was now fast approaching. As I was thrown high upon the top of a wave, I saw the seas rolling back from the sands with an apparent force that seemed nearly impossible to be withstood. Another wave "hove" me nearer the shore, and then above the roaring of the angry sea I heard the voice of Tony.

"Leave go the raft!" he shouted, "It'll kill you now! Leave go!"

My hold on the raft was relinquished, and the next instant it floated away on the top of one wave, whilst another raised me and dashed me on the shore. In an instant the hands of Tony seized me. The water receded, moving us gently seaward. Letting go of my body and seizing one of my hands, Tony threw

himself forward. Then for a moment we were immovable. The strength of the underflow passed.

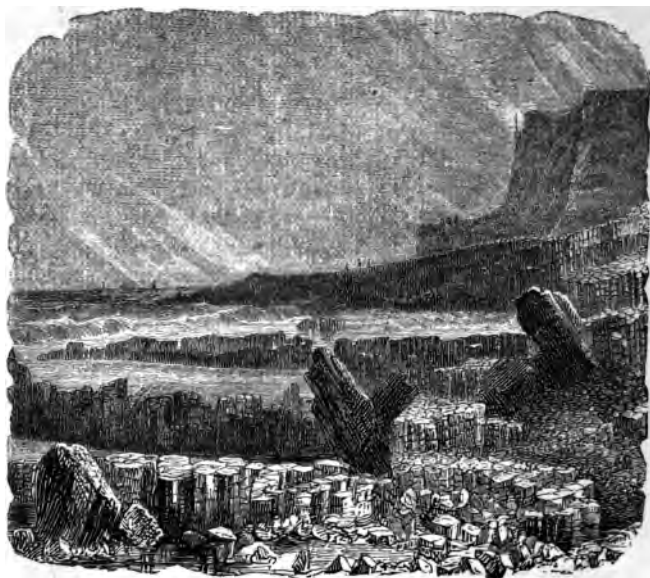
Now was our time,—*now or never*.

My feet struck the bottom, and I struggled towards the shore, partly dragged by Tony. Another wave came assisting us on the way. It was a light one, and the under-current was powerless to take us back. Again we pressed forward, and before another wave rose to break on the shore we were beyond its reach.

I had been saved in a manner nearly miraculous. Fate had favoured my efforts. The bodies of two men, probably from the boat that had capsized, were near me. I was informed by Tony that they were not bad swimmers, but that both of them had been rolled over, and drowned in the surf. He had not been able to reach them in time to save their lives.

Before being more than a minute ashore my teeth commenced chattering, and I was shivering with cold. The water was much warmer than the breeze then blowing. Higher up on the beach were banks of fine, loose sand. An excavation in one of them was made by Tony, who bade me lie down in it. He then covered my whole body with the sand, with the exception of my head, and immediately after I was warm, and, as I then believed, more comfortable and happy than I had ever been before.

I was naked and penniless on the wild coast of Florida, yet happy; and the repose that followed this reflection was profound, calm, and undisturbed by any visions of the horrible past.



CHAPTER VIII.

DOUBTFUL ESCAPE.

IN the morning we found ourselves on a long, low, narrow sand-bank—one of the Florida Keys. Not a particle of vegetation, excepting some sea-weed, was to be seen on the bank, which was not more than a quarter of a mile broad. The vessel on which we had left Mr. Ransom the night before, had disappeared, and only some of the fragments that once composed it were lying on the sand. The bodies of four of our companions were on the shore, and two of them I recognised as men who had left in the boat. It had undoubtedly been capsized, and the men in it drowned. My first employment on the shore of America was to

strip the dead body of one of the sailors, and to clothe myself with the spoils. Tony had set me the example; and while thus employed we saw approaching us from one end of the sand-bank a man whom, as he drew nearer, we recognised to be the carpenter. His story was that he had drifted ashore on a piece of the wreck, and had been nearly all the night in making the journey. In his opinion, we three were all who had been saved of the thirty-two people who had left London in the vessel. As the sun rose, the breeze died away, and the weather became very hot. Our next business, after burying the dead, was to construct some protection from the burning sun that shone down upon us. Attached to some of the yards which had drifted ashore, were large fragments of sails. These we supported a few feet from the sand by booms and other pieces of the wreck.

After walking the whole length of the sand-bank we could find nothing that had been washed ashore in the shape of food, and there was a prospect of our becoming acquainted with hunger, should we not be able to get any on the spot very soon. We could see but little hope of doing this. To the west were more sand-banks, and to the south a few rocks projecting from the water. By the aid of a raft some of these places might be reached, but we could not see that our condition would be improved by the voyage from one sand-bank to another, or by reaching barren rocks that appeared to have no flat surface.

Something, however, must be done. We were not many miles from the main land of Florida, and by going from one "key" to another, it might be reached. Towards the middle of the afternoon Tony and I commenced gathering materials for a raft, while the car-

penter employed himself in lashing them together with lines we found attached to pieces of the wreck. The raft was completed about ten o'clock that night, and we determined on leaving with it early the next morning.

At sunrise we were aroused by the carpenter, who was in a great rage with himself and everything else.

"Now, this is just my luck," he exclaimed: "after taking all the trouble to make the raft, we don't want it. There's a schooner coming down to us."

Such was, indeed, the case. Our tent had been observed by those aboard the craft, and they had stopped to pick us up. This prospect of deliverance afforded Tony and me much pleasure, but apparently produced a contrary feeling upon Robinson, the carpenter, who still continued to express much annoyance at the labour lost on the raft the day before.

The breakers, which had proved so dangerous to us, were approached in perfect safety by the schooner, as she readily responded to the guiding hand of man, unlike our obstinate, ill-fated vessel. The schooner was hove to, and a small boat manned by three men, soon reached the shore. As the bottom of the boat struck the sands, one of the men jumped out, and waded up to the spot on which we were standing. He was dressed in "dungaree" trousers, the bottoms of which rested on the tops of high heavy boots, a fancy-coloured shirt, and a broad Panama hat. He was about six feet in height, and had large and almost naked bones. His face was thin, and the colour of anything yellow.

"Shipwrecked?" he exclaimed, as he came towards us.

"Yes," answered Robinson. "We drifted ashore last night."

"Anything saved?"

"Only what you see."

"Yes, and that's not worth our losing a minute's time over. Where's the hulk?"

"I don't know," replied the carpenter. "I expect it must have broken up, till nothing remains above the water."

"Where were you from, and what was the lading?"

"From London, and with only a few tons of iron-ware. We were after cotton."

"Well, you are about as an unprofitable a lot of shipwrecked miseries as ever I saw. You are not worth saving, and I'm sorry I did not keep on my course. You will make me a heap of trouble if I have anything to do with you."

"You surely are not going to leave us here to starve!" I exclaimed, a little alarmed at his manner.

"No, I don't like to do that, because it is not at all unlikely but that I may be ashore here or somewhere else myself some time; but I must say that shipwrecked mariners, when there is nothing saved from the wreck, are a confounded nuisance, and I shall take good care not to meet 'em again if I know it. I'll put you on the mainland some time this evening. That's all I can do for you. This is the first time I ever saw a wreck where there was not something to be saved besides three miserable creatures."

We all entered the little boat, and, with much care and attention in managing it, reached the schooner, and were received on deck. The officers and crew consisted of seven men, all of whom looked like outcasts from every society, excepting their own. In the evening we had passed the Keys, and were running along the coast of the mainland.

"I don't think I can land you to-night, my men," said the person we had first met, who seemed to have a little more command than any of the others. "There's no place I know of near here where safe landing can be made. You must wait until morning. That will be the least trouble."

"But are you not going to make some port in a day or two?" asked Robinson; "a place from which we can get a ship? We are sailors without a penny, and may have much trouble if landed in some place where we cannot sign articles immediately."

"No, I don't go near any seaports," answered the skipper; "not oftener than I can help. The land-sharks there want pay for the damage the anchors do to the beds of bays or rivers. Besides, they are a little peculiar on other subjects. You must land wherever I can make it convenient. I have a plantation and a little harbour of my own on the coast, but the only craft you can leave there in is mine,—the one you are on now."

The next morning, on turning out, I saw that the schooner was running along the coast, which was not a mile away.

The land seemed covered with a dense forest. Not a green field or a space of cleared ground was to be seen. The country, for miles around, appeared to be a "howling wilderness," and only inhabited by wild-beasts of the forest.

"There," said the skipper, pointing over the bow, "do you see that point of land ahead? As soon as we turn that, I can put you ashore."

"He might as well have left us on the little sands," said Tony, who was standing near me.



CHAPTER IX.

STRANGE PROCEEDINGS.

On passing the low headland the skipper had pointed out to us, we found ourselves alongside a small boat containing two negroes who were fishing.

“Here’s a bit o’ luck!” exclaimed the skipper. “Look alive lads, and heave her to.”

The last words were addressed in a loud tone to the crew.

“Well, boys! what luck?” asked the captain, when the schooner was stopped, leaving the boat under its stern.

“Berra good luck dis mornin’, mas’r,” answered one of the negroes; “we has cotched a heap.”

“Have you got any to sell? I want some fish for my dinner.”

One of the men in the boat explained that they had been sent out for fish by their master, who lived on a

new plantation near by, and had not a sufficient supply of pork.

"Never mind," exclaimed the captain; "he'll not miss two or three fish from a heap he's never seen. I've got some good whisky aboard. Come up and have a drain, and bring some fish with you. Dan, throw the boys a line."

This temptation was not to be resisted by men who had probably been several hours fishing and several days without spirits. They ascended to the deck.

"Go forward to the cook, and get some bread and coffee," said the captain, "and I'll send you some grog."

This command was readily obeyed, and the skipper then turned to his passengers.

"Now then, my men," said he, "look sharp; there's a chance for you to go ashore. Take that boat, and leave without a word of bother. Now is your time."

Without one moment's delay the carpenter slid down the line into the boat the negroes had just left. Tony did not move and I hesitated, desiring to be guided by his proceedings. He had saved my life, and I preferred sharing my fortune with him to going with the other.

"Are you not going?" yelled the captain, advancing towards Tony.

"No; why for shall I go this way?" asked the Maltese.

One or both of the negroes at this moment discovered that the carpenter had entered their boat, and the two rushed aft. They were immediately seized by the captain and the rest of the crew, and Robinson, seeing the commotion, pushed off. He had an opportunity of getting ashore, and, for some reason unknown

to me, he was determined not to lose it. The two negroes, on seeing the boat pulled off for the shore, and finding themselves prisoners, made the largest eyes I had ever seen, and one of them would have jumped over had he not been prevented from doing so by some of the crew. The schooner was once more got under way, on the other tack, and we left the land.

"Now then, my men," said the captain, addressing Tony and me, "you say you are sailors, and, as you did not leave when a chance offered, just turn to, and go to work. Jackson," he added, turning to the mate, "put each of 'em in a watch, and see that they earn their passage."

"I am not a sailor," said I, protesting against this arrangement. "I was a passenger, on my first voyage, on the ship that was lost."

"You are not a sailor? Well! I can tell you another thing that you are not. You're no passenger here; but I dare say you can help the cook. Perhaps you can peel potatoes and wash dishes."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," I replied. "You have only done a duty in taking me from a sand-bank, and duty should also command you to put me ashore on the first favourable opportunity. I am not going to work in payment for the service you have rendered me, and you will spoil a good action by trying to make me."

I do not believe that the captain was the least afraid of me, neither was he a man so evil in disposition as to seek revenge for a little opposition to his will.

There is something in truth, when supported by a proper spirit, that commands respect; and the captain,

merely saying that he would have a talk with me presently, walked aft.

That night we had a favourable breeze, and made a good run. The next morning, on turning out, I found the schooner at anchor off the mouth of a small stream, which flowed into a natural basin surrounded with rocks, which completely shut it in. The skipper had reached what he called his plantation, and had gone ashore to see his family, leaving strict orders that the two negroes should be prevented from escaping.

There was something mysterious in the business of the men into whose hands we had fallen. They did not appear to be engaged in any ordinary trade from port to port, nor was the vessel a yacht used solely for pleasure.

The buildings on shore consisted of a few wooden huts, surrounded by about twenty-five acres of partly cleared ground, the trees denuded of their branches, but most of them still left standing. The proprietor of such a plantation could hardly afford to spend his time and money in the amusement of yachting.

I began to have some regret at not having left the schooner with Robinson, and this regret was expressed to Tony.

"What for we care about what the captain do?" he exclaimed. "He take us from the sand, and he feed us. We go ashore sometime, certain, but not in the bush."

In the afternoon the captain again came off in a boat, which contained, besides himself, one white man and three negroes. The negroes appeared more like prisoners than men who had come aboard as pas-

sengers, or as voluntary hands engaged for working the vessel.

Soon after they had come on board, we were informed by one of the crew that we should start for New Orleans that evening. The captain had changed his mind about visiting a port, and Tony was quite pleased with himself for having remained on board the vessel that was so soon to make a port where he had been once before, and where a ship for any part of Europe could be easily obtained.

"Meester Robinson," said he, "may be three months in getting to New Orlang, and we shall be there in three days."

There was something encouraging in this; but I was a little worried by the question of what I should do on reaching New Orleans, where I should be friendless, penniless, in a strange land.



CHAPTER X.

NEW ORLEANS.

LATE in the afternoon the skipper proceeded to get the vessel under way. This being done to his satisfaction, he lighted a cigar and came forward to the waist where I was standing.

"Now, young man," said he, "I want to have a little confab with you. Have you any friends in New Orleans whom you expected to meet had you reached there in the ship that is lost?"

"No," I replied; "not a soul I have ever seen before."

"Did you have any letters for any one to whom you were sent on any business?"

"No. I don't know the name of a man in New Orleans."

"Then what on earth were you going there for?"

"Only for my own amusement. I wished to see the world."

"Well, I reckon I've been a little deceived. I thought some one in New Orleans would pay me something for your passage, or I would have left you at the plantation. I have had something to do with shipwrecks in the way of saving cargo and lives, but I never came across such an unprofitable bit of salvage as you. I don't think there was a thing aboard your vessel that was worth picking up. I'm sure you were not. Did you bring ashore any money in your pockets from the wreck?"

"No. Before leaving the deck I stripped off my clothes. Those I have on were taken from one of the drowned sailors."

"Well, you are the most unprofitable creature to have any trouble with that ever I met. I don't want gratitude; it don't pay. I can't afford to be knocking about the Keys for things of that nature. I can't sell 'em. Now tell me what you are going to do when you get to New Orleans."

"I'm sure I don't know," I answered; "but must try to live in some way until I can receive money from England."

The captain turned his large eyes upon me with an intense gaze, and I saw that he had become suddenly interested.

"Do you think you can get money from thence?" he asked.

"Yes, certainly," I answered. "I have plenty of money of my own."

"How much did you have on leaving London?"

"Seven hundred pounds,—all of which is lost."

"And you are quite certain that more will be sent to you?"

"Yes."

"It might be," said the greedy skipper, "that you *are* worth looking after."

After taking a few turns up and down the deck, the captain again stopped before me.

"I expect," said he, "that you'll see hard times in New Orleans. To live there a man must have plenty of money, some knowledge of business, or the strength of a darkey to do hard work, and you've got neither of the three. You'll find yourself quite as bad off there as you were on the sand-bank. Now, I'm not so bad a fellow as you may think. I shall be in the city three or four days, and if within that time you cannot find some way of living, come and see me, and I'll see what can be done for you. You'll want my help; I'm certain of it. The other fellow picked up with you is all right, for I see that he is a thorough seaman. He has a way of earning his living, and you have not."

Then the skipper turned away, and during the remainder of the voyage had nothing more to say to me.

Before reaching New Orleans I had some practical knowledge of the fact that America is a large country. On the way up the Mississippi I expressed some surprise at not finding the "Crescent City," near its outlet into the Gulf, as I had in some manner been led to believe was the case.

"And the city is near the mouth of the river," said one of the crew. "We shall reach it in a few hours."

When I learnt that a city, one hundred and five miles from the Gulf, was called near the mouth of a river, I had some notion of an American's idea of rivers in general.

Before landing at the wharf, I received another invitation from the captain to pay him a visit within two or three days, should I not feel satisfied with my prospects ashore.

During my stay in London I had visited the docks, and seen how work is there done without useless noise and bustle, and had never witnessed such a bustle of business as that which takes place all day on the "Levée" at New Orleans. All seemed working at a task they wished to finish in a few minutes. The flags of all nations were floating from ships in the river. People around me could be heard speaking in several languages. All seemed busy as though they were at some duty aboard of a ship on fire, or at some other business demanding equal activity.

Leaving the river we advanced into a more central part of the town. There we found the same activity, but all else was changed. Most of the people, in place of being hard at work in business, were toiling energetically in the pursuit of pleasure. Large and magnificently decorated saloons were filled with people, who were drinking fast, talking fast, and apparently living fast, for an occupation.

We reached another part of the city, and again all was changed. We were amongst the indolent Creoles, principally of Spanish descent. The majority of the people we saw were languidly reposing in the shade of verandahs—people whose greatest exertions seemed to be made in smoking tobacco.

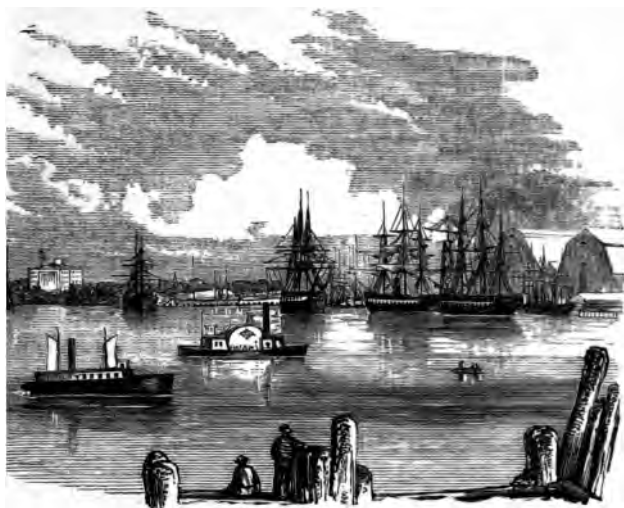
Much as I had been interested in all I had seen in

my trip on the continent with Banks, I was still more so in all to be seen in New Orleans. There was an originality in manners, customs, dress, and other matters, that showed the people were independent of old-world notions, and able to think and act for themselves.

I had naturally imagined that I was going to a country where, in all things the people would, to some extent at least, copy the usages of my native land; but such is not the case, and I have learnt to believe that where the Americans can, with any show of propriety, avoid any of the time-honoured customs and traditions of their ancestors, they always do so.

In America the rule of the road for drivers of teams is, that they should keep to the right; and I believe that this change from the custom of their forefathers was established only for the purpose of being unlike others and having a way of their own.

Another peculiarity I noticed in this visit to New Orleans was, that the cemeteries consisted of tombs built up two, and sometimes three, stories high. The dead are thus disposed of for the reason that the whole surrounding country is below the level of the river, and protected from it by the "Levée." People do not like to bury their dead in the mud and water of a swamp; and this proper respect for the departed has led to the construction of the elevated tombs.



CHAPTER XI.

MORE MYSTERY.

HAVING spent one day in seeing the city, we now turned our attention to business.

"I must no longer be idle," said Tony, "for I have but just money enough to buy me the clothes for another voyage. I must get a ship."

After this remark I could no longer allow him to be at the expense of supporting me. I must do something for myself; but I had no idea what to do, or how to look for any occupation.

"You are not a sailor," said Tony, "and you must find something to do ashore. I am going to the Levée to look for a ship." He then gave me five shillings, shook hands with me, in case we should not meet again, and started for the river.

All the people I saw about me, except the sailors and a few negroes, were well dressed. In my present costume it would be impossible for me to obtain employment in any occupation I was capable of performing with any satisfaction to myself or others. From what I had seen of New Orleans, there was but little hope of getting even the most humble or laborious employment. For any work that I had the least chance of obtaining, a negro youth would be preferred.

When left by Tony, a feeling of loneliness came over me, such as I had never experienced before. A man must first become a little world-worn and weary of life ere he becomes contented under the isolation and solitude one meets amongst a busy crowd of strange people, not one of whom he has seen before.

Instinctively my footsteps led towards the *Levée*, and in the direction of the schooner. She was anchored in the river, and for a shilling a negro took me off to her. On reaching the deck I felt a little more at home, and the invitation of the captain to call and see him on board was remembered with hope.

The skipper was ashore, and not expected back until some time in the afternoon; so I determined to wait his arrival. He came off about four o'clock, apparently well pleased with himself and everything else.

"I thought I should see you back again!" he exclaimed on seeing me. "Strangers without money are not wanted in New Orleans."

"I have come here for some advice as to what I shall do," I replied. "You told me to return here, and I wish to learn your reasons for doing so."

"Because I knew you would starve without some help. You have left home too soon, and must have some one to look after you."

It was not pleasant for a conceited young man to be told this ; nevertheless, I was not wholly insensible to its truth.

"Now, as you have thought best to come to me again," continued the captain, "let us have a little talk about business. You say that you have money in England. Now, suppose I should keep you for a few weeks, until you can hear from home, would there be any chance of my being paid?"

"Yes, certainly," I answered. "My uncle, who has money of mine, will send me what is necessary without the slightest delay."

"How much do you intend to write for?"

"Five hundred pounds."

After a conversation of about an hour, I agreed to give an order on my uncle John for five hundred pounds, payable in New Orleans, to the order of the captain, whose name was Samuel Weaver, as he objected to my having the draft made payable to myself, on the ground that I might receive the money and never pay him for whatever he might have advanced to me. By the same post I promised to write a long letter to my uncle giving him full particulars of the misfortunes I had met with, and urge upon him the necessity of relieving my wants at once. The next day, when this business was fully arranged, Captain Weaver gave me fifty dollars, and allowed me to go ashore.

Something told me that I had acted in a very foolish manner. Circumstances had placed me in a position where I might have had a good opportunity of learning to do something for myself. I should have to do so some day, for the money left by my father would not always last. Pride or shame should have pre-

vented me from applying to uncle John for more money at present, for I had reason to believe that thousands of people annually land penniless on the shores of America, and in time do well. Why had I not the courage to act like them? Why should I not do so, *now or never?*

I determined not to receive another shilling from Captain Weaver, but that I would try in some way to earn my own living. This resolution I expressed to him the next day, on visiting the schooner.

"I don't intend you shall have much more money," he replied; "for your draft may not be honoured, and I should lose it. I must give you something to do. Suppose you try a voyage on the schooner? I shall sail this evening."

I was not unwilling to do this, and the same day my name was entered on the articles as an ordinary seaman. I did not prefer the life of a sailor to any other—more especially on a small coasting vessel engaged in some mysterious business; but I did not wish to lose sight of Captain Weaver until he had received the remittance from uncle John.

That evening we started down the river with a strong current, and before noon the next day we were in the Gulf.

"Now, Mr. Jackson," said the captain to the mate, "suppose you give our new cook an airing, and we will see what he can do in the way of getting up a dinner."

The mate went below, and soon after came up, followed by a young and rather intelligent-looking mulatto, who was conducted to the galley and set to work. I had never seen this youth before, and was a little curious to know why he had been concealed on

the first few hours of the voyage. This curiosity was soon after gratified by the youth himself. He entered into conversation with me—probably for the reason that I was nearer his own age than the others, or thought I might be more communicative. In the evening I learnt from him that he had been the slave of a very hard master in New Orleans, and that Captain Weaver had kindly hidden him on the schooner, and had promised to let him work his passage to Boston, where he would be free.

Why had the captain made this promise? I did not believe that he ever intended making the voyage to Boston, for I had understood from him that he never left the Gulf of Mexico. He was certainly a slave stealer—what else besides I knew not. The negroes he had taken to New Orleans were no longer on board. What had become of them? Into whose hands had I fallen? Was I not in a fair way of being robbed of my money, and perhaps of life itself? Time only would tell. My many hours of anxious thought upon the subject that night confirmed the suspicion that I had left home a little too young.



CHAPTER XII.

A MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

"YELLOW JAKE," or Jake, as our new cook was called, was so pleased with the anticipation of full liberty and the emancipation from the tyranny of his late master, that he was the happiest man aboard the schooner. He had a joke for everything and every one who spoke to him, and in his replies to the remarks of others he displayed much wit and humour. He was never pleased at being addressed as "Yellow Jake," and on one occasion, when having to reply to that name to one of the men, he expressed himself as quite satisfied with his colour.

"After what I've seen of the colour of a human

being up in Alabama," said he, "I'm quite pleased with the colour the Lord has given me."

"Why, what was the colour of the human creature you saw there, Jake?" asked one of the men.

"Well," answered the mulatto, "I'll tell you. Up in Alabama, and on the very plantation whar I was raised, thar was a boy."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed another of the crew. "How singular!"

"Isn't so?" continued Jake. "A boy with all one side of him as black as the twelve of spades. One side of his face, one half of his nose, one side of his body, even to the wool of the head, was perfect nigger."

"Well, that is certainly strange," said the man. "I never saw anything like that."

"Nor I," said another of the crew. "How old was he, Jake?"

"About five years old—too young to wear any clothes—and I've had a good look at him hundreds of times. If he were standing with one side towards you, you would swear that he was a complete nigger, and nothing else."

"Well, I must admit," said the man, "that you are quite right in being thankful that you are not like the boy you have mentioned. He would be a curiosity in any part of the world; but was there anything peculiar or strange about the other half of his body?"

"No, nothing at all," answered Jake; "that was only black too,—jist like the side I told you of."

The man afterwards declared that he had never been "sold" so cheaply before.

Captain Weaver frequently joined in conversation with the crew, who showed him but little more respect than they did to one of themselves. Two or three

times, while crossing the Gulf, he had long conversations with me, and asked many questions about my relatives and friends in London. Believing that he was trying to quell some rising doubts about the payment of the order on my uncle, I gave him all the satisfaction in my power. In return I asked an explanation of him, and wished to know if he was going to Boston.

"No, certainly not," he replied; "I never go beyond the Keys. You have been listening to Jake. He stands no chance at all of getting to Boston; but you take my advice, and say nothing to him on the subject, or you may bring yourself into trouble."

"But he tells me," said I, "that you promised to take him to Boston, where he will be free."

"Well, what of that? Haven't you got any sense? I see that we must have a little understanding with each other. I must let you know who and what I am. I'm just one of the meanest persons you ever saw; and yet, like most other people, I've some good points about me; for example, I do slaveholders all the harm possible. I never lose an opportunity of stealing their favourite property—the slaves. I learnt this propensity or virtue when quite young, for I was brought up in the State of Massachusetts. Since I have been South, I've made many slaveholders feel quite certain that slaves were very uncertain property to hold, and this has a strong tendency to lessen their desire for keeping them. The two darkies we found fishing, as well as those brought off from my plantation, were stolen, and I sold them in New Orleans, getting three thousand dollars for the four. Now that is what I call doing something towards giving slaveholders a knowledge of the iniquity of their doings."

"Well, what are you going to do with me?" I asked. "You cannot sell me."

"No; you are too white. I go about the world doing good, but expect to be paid for it, and am not going to lose anything by you. You must earn a living in some way while you are with me."

This explanation was perfectly satisfactory; for I learnt from it that I had fallen into the hands of an unscrupulous man, who would not hesitate to rob me by any means in his power.

A week passed, and we were cruising backwards and forwards off the Keys—poor Jake all the time thinking that we were on the direct course for Boston. I did not dare to undeceive him, for Captain Weaver had me bound under a bond of four hundred and ninety pounds to remain with him until I had received that amount from him when it had arrived from my uncle. I had every reason to believe that the captain would try to get rid of me by the time the money arrived, and keep it all for his own use. It was my business to prevent this; and therefore I must not try to thwart his intentions about Jake, or any one else, but myself.

Why was he cruising about the Keys? What could he expect to gain by incurring the hardships and dangers of hovering about a neighbourhood that had ever proved so fatal to most storm-tossed vessels that approached the place? This was another mystery—one that time would perhaps explain. I knew very well that most masters of vessels would rather encounter a storm on any other coast than that of the southern and western part of Florida.

Captain Weaver did not seem to think so, for he was continually growling about the fair weather.

These complaints were one afternoon changed to expressions of satisfaction. A storm was rising from the south-west. Instead of trying to make as great an offing as possible from the dangerous rocks and sands of the Keys, Captain Weaver steered directly for them, evidently seeking safety in what others would regard as their greatest danger. He was clearly acquainted with every passage amongst the rocks and sand-banks, and the schooner drawing but a few feet of water, could be taken to a place of shelter from gales in which other vessels would be wrecked.

As we dropped anchor under the lee of a long, low, and narrow sand-bank, the storm burst upon us. The sea was instantly thrown into a violent commotion, and in a few minutes the crests of the high waves were washing the top of the sand-bed that sheltered us from their fury. Two or three hours passed and the gale seemed to rage with increased violence. Protected as we were from the main force of the seas, the vessel leaped and rolled as though frantically trying to break from the fetters that chained her to the earth.

Captain Weaver was delighted. "If this gale does not bring us some luck," I heard him say to Mr. Jackson, "then there is not a vessel within twenty miles of the Keys excepting our own."

How did he expect any luck by other vessels having to encounter a storm? This question brought to my recollection the remarks of disappointment he made about not being able to save anything from the wreck of the cotton tub that had brought me from London, and another mystery was explained. Captain Weaver was a wrecker as well as a slave stealer.



CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER WRECK.

Just as night was closing upon us a large ship was seen to the seaward. The topmasts were gone, and yet under all sail that could be spread, the vessel was lying as close to the subsiding gale as possible. The officers on board evidently knew the danger to which they were exposed, and were making every possible effort to keep from making leeway. Their exertions, however, were of no avail, for the wind and sea were driving the vessel nearer the shore each moment.

"That vessel is ours!" exclaimed the captain in a joyful tone; "and my only hope now is that there will be but four or five of the crew saved, and that they will be darkies."

These words were heard by Jake, who appeared much pleased that the captain had so much regard for coloured people. Although the ship was drawing nearer, it gradually disappeared from our view, for

darkness had now set in. Half an hour passed, when, on the wings of the gale, came the voices of the officers on the doomed ship giving their orders. The two vessels were not more than a hundred and fifty yards apart, yet, separated by the ridge of sand, one was safe, and the other was on the verge of destruction. Above the roaring of the wind and waves we heard the fall of yards on the deck as the vessel struck the bank. The gale was fast subsiding, while the sea had but just been aroused to its greatest fury. We knew from the tops of the waves that washed over the bar protecting us, that there could be but little chance of any of the crew being saved. The seas were running too high for a boat to live, and so strong that the wreck must soon be broken up.

"Things never work right for me!" exclaimed Captain Weaver, in a peevish tone, to the mate. "I like to see a ship lost with all hands, and no one left to dispute our right to an undamaged cargo; but it's just my luck, always to find all the cargo lost, and then to be worried with some of the crew, who will persist in saving themselves."

For some time we only heard the moans of the dying gale and the angry roaring of the waves as they broke on the bar. We no longer heard voices of command. Undoubtedly all hope of saving the ship had suddenly been extinguished in the minds of the officers. The crew had reached the horrible emergency of *sauve qui peut*, and, hopeless of aid, each was silently struggling for himself.

To me it was painful to think that human beings were combating with death within a few yards of us, and that we were powerless to aid them; and yet I *had reason to believe* that some, if not all of my

companions, were hoping that not a soul would be saved from the wreck.

A little more than half an hour after hearing the ship strike we heard a voice over the side. A man was loudly shouting in the French language—probably for assistance; but, like a brave man, he had not called until he had found a hope of the call not being made in vain.

“Some cursed fool is not willing to die!” exclaimed Captain Weaver; “and I suppose that we must throw him a line.”

“We had better throw him the end of a crowbar,” answered Mr. Jackson; “and let him catch it with his head.”

There seemed to be no haste with my companions in saving the life of the drowning man. The captain and another walked forward (when they should have gone aft) and looked over the side.

“Ship ahoy!” exclaimed the sailor. “What do you want?”

“*Merci!*” answered the Frenchman, already thanking those by whom he expected to be immediately rescued from the fate that was threatening him. He was close alongside, and at the stern of the vessel. Slowly the captain and Mr. Jackson walked aft. Anxious to see the man rescued, I followed them. A line was thrown over the side by Mr. Jackson, who shouted, “Lay hold! Put yourself in a bowline.”

I thought this advice was not very well suited to a drowning man. How could he make a bowline while trying to live in a heavy sea? I could see, too, by the light of the moon that had just found an opening through the breaking clouds, that enough of the line had not been paid out. The Frenchman was making

frantic efforts to hold on to the side of the vessel, when, at that instant, she rolled heavily to the star-board, and he was buried deep under the water. He may have risen to the surface after this submersion, but we saw and heard no more of him. His life might have been saved by the slightest show of activity in rendering him assistance. I have every reason to believe that neither the captain nor the mate wished to save the drowning man.

When morning dawned not a breath of air was moving over the Gulf, and the agitation of the waters had greatly subsided. The seas were no longer breaking over the sand-bar. A great part of the ship we had seen the night before had broken up, and the inlet in which we were lying was strewn with pieces of the wreck and portions of her cargo. Lying on the sand-bar, we saw four of the bodies of the lost crew. They had only reached it to be rolled over and over and drowned in the surf.

Captain Weaver was in high glee.

"There's not a living soul to be seen!" he exclaimed, "and I can see heaps of things. Mr. Jackson, lower a boat at once. There will be no danger on this side of the bar. If we find any man who has not thought proper to die, we must knock him on the head, and get rid of him."



CHAPTER XIV.

LIFE WITH A WRECKER.

ALL the forenoon Mr. Jackson, with four of the crew, was busy in picking up light articles of the cargo that had been washed over a low part of the bar. These consisted of boxes of silks and gloves, many of them but little damaged by the water. In the afternoon the captain proceeded to examine the wreck, now partly concealed from us by the ridge of sand.

Curiosity led me to ascend the mast in order to get a better view of it. The broken hulk was about thirty feet from the sand, on which the seas were still dashing high, and on it I saw two men. They were apparently afraid of passing the short distance between them and the sands, and were evidently waiting for the seas to go down. The top of our mast must have been observed and our voices heard; yet we heard no shouts for assistance.

During the remainder of the day I was busily engaged, assisting at taking aboard boxes and bales of freight that had been picked up on the bar. Before night a communication by lines had been established

between the bar and the wreck, which was boarded by the captain and three others.

For the greater part of that night and all the next day we toiled hard in saving property from the stranded vessel. Amongst other things brought from the wreck was a small square box containing two hundred French gold watches, and as many gold chains. I was told that the ship was from Havre, and that its destination was undoubtedly New Orleans, the great market for French goods in America.

I saw nothing of the two Frenchmen I had seen clinging to the wreck. They must have been living at the time it was boarded by the captain and the others ; but what had become of them ? I did not dare to make any inquiry—nor was any necessary for satisfying my curiosity. I believed they had been killed, and any statement made by those I might question on the subject would not have made me believe the contrary.

There was much more property that might have been saved, but it was of less value than that we had obtained, and I believe the captain was afraid to stay near the wreck any longer. We were not far from an islet, where there was a small United States military station, and Captain Weaver was anxious to leave the neighbourhood with the valuable property he had already obtained. Early in the evening we hove the anchors, and, under a gentle rising breeze, glided from under the shelter of the sand-bar, and moved out on to the broad waters of the Mexican Gulf.

Jake, the cook, was delighted. He was under the pleasing delusion that he was again on the way to Boston. Never was a poor creature more cruelly deceived. He was on the way to Captain Weaver's

plantation, on reaching which I determined to leave the vessel. By waiting for a better opportunity I might get into trouble by being found in the company of murderers and thieves.

On the morning we dropped anchor off the plantation, where I informed Captain Weaver of my wish to quit the vessel.

"What for?" he asked. "I thought you were fast becoming a sailor, and that you liked the life you are living."

"I do not dislike a sailor's life," I replied; "but I do not wish to follow it on your schooner. I am afraid of some time being hanged or imprisoned."

"That's because you're young, and don't understand my business. I'm quite safe. Uncle Sam can only send a ship of war after me should he learn that there's anything wrong, and then he cannot catch me. I can run into a hundred places along my cruising ground where a ship can't follow me. I shall make a fortune and go north within a year, in spite of all the governments on earth."

"But, independent of fear," said I, "there are reasons for my wishing to leave this vessel. I do not wish to be engaged in an evil occupation. I have some principle and a conscience."

The captain was highly amused.

"Very well," said he, after having a good laugh at what he called my simplicity; "at the next port we make you can leave if you like."

From these words, and the tone in which they were spoken, I believed that he was willing to get rid of me. He was thinking of the draft that would arrive in a few weeks from my uncle. I was not willing to lose more than four hundred and fifty

pounds for the sake of pleasing a villain, and I quickly informed Captain Weaver that such was the case. I told him that I wanted some of the money to enable me to return to England, or to visit some other part of the world, and that I would not lose the "run" of him until I got it.

"All right," he answered; "then stick to the vessel. It's my home most of the time."

"No," I replied, "I am determined on having some money when it comes from England; but that is no reason why I should wait for it, by living a life of crime. Can't you find something for me to do on the plantation?"

For some time this question was unanswered. The captain was "calculating" the chances. I believe he did not care to displease me, or to arouse my suspicions too strongly, for the reason that I might in some way reach New Orleans, watch the post office day and night, and bring him into trouble. I knew too much of his business to be allowed to escape with the idea that I was to be swindled. The captain yielded.

"Well," he said, "if you'd rather live on the plantation than on board, I dare say the overseer can find some amusement for you. I want nothing but what is fair, and I think you have proof that I am willing to oblige you."

A few hours before I was thinking myself a fool for having placed myself in the care of a bad man, and now I thought the captain a fool for having trusted a youth like me with too much knowledge of his business. I had not the slightest doubt but what, with a few plain words, I could easily control him. I was deceived.



CHAPTER XV.

COFFEE.

THE captain went ashore, taking the box of watches and chains, and in the afternoon the boat came off for some more of the property taken from the wreck, and with an intimation for me to go ashore with it. The lading completed, two hours later I had a twilight view of the "plantation" owned by Captain Weaver. I had a long conversation with him that evening, in which he told me that he could afford to assist me without any injury to himself, and that, although, in some respects, perhaps, he was what many might call a bad man, yet he was not incapable of doing a kind action. He said that, seeing I was a useless creature, who would probably have starved in New Orleans without some assistance, he had volunteered to keep me, in

the belief that he could make me earn my own living until I could hear from my friends.

He further said that game was much cheaper in the neighbourhood of the plantation than salt meat, purchased in the markets of the neighbouring ports, and that he generally kept a man who did little besides supplying the hands of the plantation with fresh meat. He concluded by asking me how I should like to be a hunter, and offered me the option of following that occupation until the letter from my uncle should arrive.

I was delighted with this proposal, and gladly accepted it. Hunting, I thought, would be nothing but enjoyment, and I could not have devised a better way of spending a few weeks than by seeking the excitement of hunting in an American forest, of which I had read so much.

The next morning I had a look at Captain Weaver's plantation. It was certainly not a place where agriculture was carried on for the purpose of making either money or a permanent homestead. In fact, it evidently was a sham to conceal the real occupation of the owner. This opinion was formed from my own observation; but it was confirmed by the statement of the captain, that it was necessary for him to have a temporary home, while trying to make a fortune in some other business, besides that of cultivating the soil. The plantation was a place where runaway and stolen slaves were collected by the captain or his agents, and hidden until they could be taken to market, or where all property procured by him or his agents on land or sea was stored away until otherwise disposed of.

Captain Weaver's neighbours—if people living six

or eight miles distant were entitled to that appellation—probably thought that he was an enterprising man, trying successfully to introduce into Florida the cultivation of coffee; and as that would necessarily be a work of time, they no doubt praised his energy and enterprise in trying to better his fortune, in the meantime, by his schooner in the coasting trade.

The plants for the coffee trees had been growing for a little more than two years and a half, and the first crop of berries was just being gathered. The trees, or rather bushes, were only about seven feet high. The berries and opening flower-buds are both found on the same bush at the same time.

Captain Weaver seemed quite a different man on shore from what he was at sea. He was now a planter, and condescended to give me much information about his business.

"I don't expect to make a fortune at coffee-growing," said he, "for the soil here is too rich to grow good berries; but a home here is convenient, and the boys must have something to do; so I let 'em amuse themselves. Coffee berries are not good until they have been kept a year, and the little crop they are now gathering I shall take with me to Massachusetts. Retired into private life, I shall then be able to refresh myself with a cup of coffee of my own growing, and shall have some substantial and pleasant proof to place before my friends as to how I made a fortune down South."

On board the schooner I had noticed that the coffee served was delicious in flavour—indeed, equal to the best I had ever tasted, either in England or during my short stay on the Continent,—quite different to that wretched beverage doled out at cheap coffee-

shops to the working-men in London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other large towns in Great Britain. I made some inquiries of the captain about the quality of berries from different countries, in the hope of ascertaining which were the best, always having heard at home that Mocha is the most delicious of all coffees, though weak ; that from Java or the West Indies strong and exciting, and that from Bourbon the most penetrating. But coffee will grow everywhere within certain latitudes, and I was curious to know with what result.

“ There is not so much difference in the berries,” said he, “ as some folks imagine. A very good cup of coffee may be made of the berries grown here, and they are as bad as can be found anywhere. Some people can’t make good coffee even with the finest berries brought from Loheia. Indeed, when I was a seaman before the mast, I made several voyages to Great Britain, and of all the abominable stuff that is served out to poor sailors and artisans in such towns as Liverpool, London, and Plymouth, even at the railway stations, there is nothing so villainous as what is poured down their throats as coffee. In the first place, the coffee-shop keeper buys the berries in large quantities ready roasted—baked would be a better expression for such a destruction of them—from a grocer, who does not roast them even himself, but has always a stale stock of them on hand. Now, nothing requires greater care than the roasting of the berries ; while there, for the purposes of trade, they are baked till they are almost black and burnt to a coal—instead of being of a bright chestnut colour—and the aromatic and bitter qualities are consequently utterly destroyed. When such over-roasted berries *are ground* they produce a black-looking dust, and the

decoction—for those ignorant coffee-shop cooks always boil the powder in an inundation of water—is simply a muddy, unwholesome, hot drink, rendered more so by the addition of what is called milk, which, in those large towns, as in New York, is chiefly procured from diseased, stall-fed cows, as far as the milk itself is concerned, and then diluted with water till it requires to have a consistency superadded of sheep's brains, and such a mess of nastiness that it is quite revolting to think of it.

“There are two ways of cooking coffee. Boiling was the original method, till Count Rumford, about three-quarters of a century ago, proved that in the course of boiling much of the aroma was lost in the steam which evaporated. However, if you follow this receipt you may get as good a cup of coffee by boiling as by infusion. Let the berries, not having been roasted more than a fortnight, be ground in a *covered* mill. Then place two ounces in the coffee-boiler, adding a pint of cold water. When it boils, pour off the liquid, keeping it separate till a pint of boiling water, which has replaced it in the coffee-boiler, has been allowed to boil for three minutes, when add the first decoction to the former, and put the whole in a warm earthenware or metal pot, and serve it hot with boiled milk; but never serve it out of the coffee-boiler itself.

“I prefer infusion as the better method of cooking coffee, using the earthenware filter or percolator, now generally employed for the purpose, both in Europe and America, and always have the coffee for the day's consumption roasted and ground the same day—the great secret, I believe, in getting a good cup of coffee. Recollect that tin filters are not well adapted for making coffee, as the coffee corrodes the tin. Earthen-

ware percolators are infinitely the best. Have ready some boiling water in a pan to put the filter in to keep the liquor warm while it runs out of the coffee. Put the fresh-ground coffee into the filter, and pour boiling water upon it. Let it remain in the pan of hot water till all the liquor is in the lower part of the filter. Then take away the top chamber of the filter, put on the lid, and serve the coffee hot with boiled milk. Make your coffee strong, unless it is to be taken after dinner, as in France—what they call *café à l'eau*—when coffee of half the usual strength is usually served, without cream or sugar, to be qualified by a liqueur glass of brandy."

After this conversation, I had the curiosity to see the black cook on the plantation preparing coffee for breakfast, where I saw confirmed what Captain Weaver had said—the beans being only roasted to a red chestnut colour. In a raw state the seeds have no sign of the peculiar properties they possess; but when roasted an oil exudes from them, which thickens like butter, as it grows cold. Coffee should not be ground until required for use, lest the oily particles should be dried up, or escape. The after process of boiling or infusion develops the aromatic or bitter principles, the health-giving properties of the plant. After the black cook had roasted the beans they were cooled as quickly as possible, by being turned into a broad dish and tossed up in the air. The moment they were cooled they were ground in a covered mill, and the coffee placed in the filter to prepare the morning's meal by infusion.

Coffee thus prepared serves the double purpose of an agreeable tonic and an exhilarating beverage, without the unpleasant effects of wine.



CHAPTER XVI.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A JAGUAR.

THE next day Weaver was again off to sea, and I was left under the control of the overseer, who was to get me initiated into the art of killing the most game with the least trouble. Often since that day have I smiled at my own simplicity. I was but a youth, brought up in England, and had never been in a forest in my life. I had not the slightest experience of a hunter's life, and the idea that anything could be expected of me in the way of providing game for the hands on a plantation must have been very amusing to Captain Weaver when he proposed that I should take the situation of hunter on his plantation.

There was a hunter belonging to the establishment, and I soon learnt that my office was to be that of carrying an extra gun for his use, to carry his whisky-

bottle and light game, such as squirrels and rabbits, and make myself generally useful. In place of the thing being amusement, I found hunting to be downright hard work. The hunter under whom I had to serve was scarcely one remove from the brute creation; but in proportion to her denial of higher mental qualifications to him, Nature had endowed him with considerable instinct.

It was hard work for me to please him in trying to perform my duty. While he was stalking, or, as he called it, "sneaking," for game, he wished me to remain far in the rear, so as not to frighten the objects he was pursuing; but in case he wanted the rifle I was carrying he reached back his hand, and unless the gun was placed in it instantly he was in a violent rage. I tried to reason with him on the absurdity of his demands: but I might as well have talked to one of the dogs that sometimes used to accompany us.

The only name I ever heard applied to this eccentric creature was "Phil." He had several scars on his person, giving evidence of wounds received in encounters with bears, Indians, and in free fights generally. I could not believe that Phil was following his occupation for any fixed sum per month or year. In fact, neither the carpenter, overseer, nor any of the white men on the plantation, appeared to be doing so. Each did as he liked, and only attended to his duties when so inclined; and I fancied that I could easily understand why they were all living the strange life they were doing. I believed them to be refugees from justice—men who had escaped from the punishment due for crimes they had committed in other places. They *were outlaws, glad to find a home anywhere outside*

the walls of a prison. They were safe on the plantation, for it was seldom visited by people having another home, and several dogs and negro children were apparently on the watch for strangers.

Had a party of United States dragoons found their way to the "clearing" for the purposing of arresting any one who might be wanted, their visit would have resulted in disappointment. All who might have objections to appear before the public would naturally take themselves to the forest, where they could not be pursued, or they could leave the plantation in a boat.

Before Captain Weaver had been gone a week I was heartily tired of my part of the business of hunting. It was hard work, and we were employed at it some days for sixteen hours. We were generally out by sunrise in the morning—that being the best time for squirrels and game birds. In the evening we often went hunting opossums, and in this amusement we were generally joined by some of the negroes, who are nearly as fond of catching opossums as they are of eating them.

One evening Phil and I went out after opossums alone. The night was apparently fine as we left the house and crossed the clearing; but not long after we had reached the edge of the forest, low thunder was heard in the distance, and dark heavy clouds were rolling up from the south-west.

"We shall have a thunder shower," said Phil; "but I'm not going back without game, for all that. It would be a shame to bring you out without giving you something to 'tote' back."

We left the edge of the clearing, and followed the dogs along the sea-shore. Before we had gone a

quarter of a mile one of the dogs gave tongue, about one hundred yards to the right.

"That's Ponto," said Phil; "he's got somethin' treed."

We turned, and moved in the direction where the dog with short, sharp, angry barks was calling us.

"Tis'nt a 'possum," said Phil. "Ponto never gits in a rage over a little critter like that. I wonder what it can be?"

We hastened forward, and in a minute later were under the branches of the tree with the dog. On seeing us he ceased barking, and commenced uttering low growls, with his eyes turned upwards.

Following the example of Phil, I gazed aloft. About twenty feet above us were glowing two fiery eyes. Before I had time to move Phil brought his gun to his shoulder and fired. Almost at the same instant he sprang forward towards the tree, and there fell at my feet a large heavy mass, that uttered a shriek of mingled rage and agony. I jumped backwards out of the way, and for a minute there was a fearful struggle between the dog and the object that had fallen or launched itself from the tree. Above the angry growls of the two combatants, I heard the voice of Phil trying to call off the dog.

The strife was ended by the hunter, who had reloaded his rifle. Approaching the two struggling animals his sight was assisted by a flash of lightning, and placing the muzzle of the gun at the head of the creature the dog was contending with, he again fired. The battle instantly ceased, and the angry growls of the dog were immediately changed to low whines and moans of agony. Ponto was mortally wounded, and *dying*.

Phil handed me his gun, and picking up the great dog in his arms he started for the plantation. I followed and asked him several questions—none of which he answered. He was too strongly affected with rage and grief to heed a word I said.

When about half-way home he stopped, and putting down the dog as gently on the earth as a mother would lay her sleeping child in a cradle, he exclaimed, "'Taint no use toting this 'ere dog home. Poor Ponto is dead."

"But what killed him?" I asked. "What was it you shot?"

"A painter," he replied. "Couldn't you tell the varmint by his eyes and cries?"

Phil would speak no more, and immediately on reaching home, in the midst of a heavy thunder-storm, he commenced the work of getting drunk, and I turned into my bunk for the night.

Early the next morning I went with Phil to the scene of the last night's adventure. Stretched under the tree we found a fine jaguar. It had been wounded by the first discharge of Phil's rifle, and had undoubtedly left the tree to obtain revenge. This we thought must have been the case from the distance it leaped, for had it simply fallen from the effects of the shot, its fall would have been nearly perpendicular.

Fortunately for me the dog happened to be at my feet as the creature reached the ground, or I should have been seized instead of him. The spring of the animal had been made for Phil, but that agile and self-possessed hunter had passed under the creature in its flight, leaving it to face me.

"Had it not been for Ponto," said I, "there is no

doubt but what I should have been killed. You gave me no warning, and the dog alone saved me."

"Yes," answered Phil, as he was preparing to take the hide off the jaguar, "such accidents sometimes happens. It's onfortunate, but it can't be helped now."

From these words I understood that Phil thought the loss of the dog a much greater misfortune than had the jaguar killed me.

Phil evidently valued human life less than that of his dog ; yet Phil was not a Southerner, who might be apt to look upon a fellowman of a different colour as a beast of the field, and as of less consequence than his canine companion. I could only account for this indifference by the conviction that the lawless persons with whom I was then associated intended to get me out of the way, by fair means or foul, before the arrival of the money from my uncle,—a suspicion which was presently about to be confirmed in a remarkable way.



CHAPTER XVII.

A WARNING.

ONE moonlight evening on passing near the huts in which the plantation hands resided, I was addressed by a man lying on the ground in the shade of a house. I turned and saw "Yellow Jake."

I had supposed that this person was still employed as cook on board the schooner, and was surprised at finding him "creolizing" on the plantation.

"What does this mean, Jake?" I exclaimed, going near him.

His appearance suggested an answer to my question. He had rebelled against working on shore as a slave, instead of being taken to Boston according to promise, and had got considerably the worst of it. In a

minute's conversation with him I learnt that such was the fact. He had refused to work on the plantation, attempted to escape, and being taken, had been imprisoned, tortured, and starved. Only the day before he had yielded, by making known his willingness to go to work, and a day or two had been given him to recover from his punishment.

"Sit down here," said he; "no one will see us, and I want to have some talk with you."

I obeyed his request.

"That's one reason why I gave in," continued Jake, "because I couldn't git to speak to you in any other way. You are in jist as much danger here as I am, and perhaps even more. They don't want me to die, and, if you don't kick the bucket soon, they'll make you."

"Why is that, Jake?" I asked, "why do they wish me to die?"

"To get your money."

"But I have no money."

"No, not yet; but you are never to see New Orleans again."

I succeeded after about an hour's conversation with Jake in learning that, having some suspicion that he was not going to be treated with fair play, or according to promise, he had taken some trouble to learn Captain Weaver's real intentions concerning him. In doing this he had placed himself in a position to overhear a long conversation between the captain, the overseer, and Phil, the huntsman. Jake declared that from what he then heard he was certain that all on the plantation, except some of the slaves, were thieves, robbers, and murderers.

He had found out that he was to be taken, with

two or three others, to Mobile, and sold on the first favourable opportunity. I was never to leave the plantation alive, for fear that I might reach New Orleans and prevent the captain from receiving some money that was to be sent me from England.

Jake had understood that there was a chance of my being taken away by fever and ague if properly neglected, and if this did not happen, I was to be disposed of in some way before Captain Weaver returned, for he never wished to see me again.

This was highly interesting news, for I could not have the slightest suspicion that Jake was trying to deceive me. Had he not overheard some such conversation as he described, he would not have known that I was expecting any money from England, or that the captain had the least chance of obtaining any money by having me put out of the way. Furthermore, Jake's story was only something in confirmation of my own suspicions. I knew that Captain Weaver and many of those working with him were murderers; and why should I think that they would spare me any more than others?

I thought of the manner in which Phil had spoken to me only two or three days before, when I was congratulating myself on being saved from the jaguar at the expense of the dog. The more I thought of the subject the more certain I became that Captain Weaver intended to rob me of my money; and, in order to do so, that he would not be particular in getting me put out of the way.

It was now clear that I must leave the plantation if I wished to live, and that I must reach New Orleans within six or seven weeks if I did not care to be robbed.

"Jake," said I, "do you wish to leave the plantation?"

"Of course I do," he replied. "I'm not going to let that man make anything by stealing me, if I have to die to keep him from selling me. I don't know how to escape alone; but if we start together we might get clear off. You'll die before the Captain comes back if you try to hang on here. The man they call Phil will kill you for certain. He is kept for killing more than what's eaten."

I had slept in the same hut with Phil, and had been most of the time in his company since coming ashore. I told Jake this, and then asked, "How is it, Jake, that I have not seen you before, and that I did not know you were on the plantation until seeing you to-day?"

"I don't know anything about that," he answered, "but I know I've seen too much of him. Whenever any of the hands on the plantation are to be punished, he's always riled if he don't get the job of doing it. They call him 'the doctor of the plantation,' and he has been called to visit me twice. If he's called in again I shall die. Look at me now, and take care that he's not called to see you. So you'd better make yourself scarce about here, and let me go with you."

This advice was not needed, for I had already seen enough to feel the necessity of leaving the plantation.

"I am ready to go any hour, Jake," said I; "and all depends now on yourself."

"Then I'm afraid we shall have to wait a day or two. I'm so very weak that I can hardly move. I'll try to get ready for a start to-morrow night. I'll see you again before then, but meanwhile take care of yourself."

This advice I promised to follow, and we parted.



CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER WARNING.

THE next morning I again went out with Phil *hunting*, as this kind of thing is called by the Yankees, and which Webster defines to signify “to go in search of, for the purpose of shooting; *as*, to *hunt* wolves, bears, squirrels, and partridges, the common use of the word in America.” We took a longer walk than usual—our way lying through a dense forest, away from the coast, and on higher ground than we had yet hunted over. I should think that we walked a distance of ten or twelve miles, and then found ourselves at the foot of a hill. Phil had evidently left the plantation with the intention of going a long distance, for we had taken with us a pony, as he said, for the purpose of “taking

back the game." I was pleased at this, for, not knowing but what I should have to make a start from the plantation that night, I did not wish to take too much exercise during the day.

On our march that morning my companion took more pulls at the whisky bottle than was usual so early in the day. He generally waited until our work was nearly done before troubling me often for the bottle, but on this day it was just the reverse.

"I drank too much last night," said he, trying to apologise for his frequent libations. "My hands and eyes are shaky, and I must brace 'em up."

As we moved along the foot of the hill we came in view of a small pool of water, evidently formed by a spring flowing from the hill. As we drew near it, there suddenly emerged from the pool a large animal that rushed towards a thicket or grove on the brow of the hill. It was followed by another and a smaller one.

"S'elp me he'ving! a buffler and calf," exclaimed Phil, raising his rifle to his shoulder.

The crack of the rifle was followed by the bellowing of the calf as it tumbled to the earth.

"Broke its back! I thought I should," said Phil, as he immediately applied the powder-flask to the muzzle of the gun, in the act of reloading.

The bison, or buffalo, as this creature is here called, made no response to the cry of her young, but dashed into the thicket. It was, probably, the last of its race in that part of Florida, and had been made too timid by the frequent appearance of its human enemies to heed anything but its own safety.

After having carefully loaded his rifle, and bidding me follow close behind him, Phil started for the pros-

trate animal he had shot. The hunter had been bracing his nerves to some purpose, for a better shot could not have been made. As he had said, the backbone of the calf was broken. The shot had been made at a distance of nearly two hundred yards, and the broadside of the object had not been fairly presented towards him.

The calf was a large, fat one, and Phil was quite pleased at the prize that had fallen into our possession.

"This is the first buffler I've killed for three years," said he, "and it's sumthin' like hunting. I'll eat the most of it myself; and we must kill some coons, squirrels, crows, and other insects for the niggers. Yes, this is what I'd like to do every day," continued Phil, as he proceeded to cut the calf's throat with his hunting-knife. "If I had plenty of buffler-meat to eat, and onct in a while a fight with an Injun or a bar to keep me from getting rusty, I'd live to be as old as Jerusalem."

He now paused to take his tenth drink from the whisky-can, the contents of which was getting low.

"The only excitement I have now," he continued, "is in a little job I get now and then on the plantation, but it's tame—mighty tame. I don't car particular about killin' coons or woppin' niggers. I'd rather have a scrimage with a catamount, a bar, or a few Buck Injuns, and sich like varmints. I'm goin' to strike for somethin' better to do when Cap'en Weaver comes back. That will be the thing to do. This buffler, and that painter we killed the other night, has just give me an appetite for somethin' better than is generally found about the 'clearings' in this part of the world."

When the calf was disemboweled, and its head cut off, it was firmly lashed to the pony's back, and we started for the plantation. For nearly an hour the only incidents of our journey worthy of my notice was the unusual state of excitement I observed Phil to be in. He seemed so elated at the success of the day, that I could easily fancy that he had never achieved so great a feat before.

The whisky in the can was all gone, and my companion was what many people would call drunk. We reached a part of the trail, or rather the course we were pursuing, where the road was inclined to be swampy, and in crossing one place a little more miry than the rest, the pony went suddenly down.

It was carrying a heavy load, and had got somewhat exhausted by the distance its burden had already been borne, and now each moment the pony became buried deeper in the mire. We were in the State of Florida, where everglades prevail, and we had struck on this miniature feature of the country.

After removing the carcass of the buffalo calf from the pony's back, we were unable to extricate the poor beast from the slough into which it had fallen. We toiled at this unpleasant work for nearly an hour, and during that time I received but little assistance from my drunken companion, and was unable to do anything alone. By this time the pony could not make the slightest exertion towards helping itself, and was evidently aware of its impending fate. Poor thing! its cries for help even sobered the hunter. Indeed, Phil had now become sober enough to understand this, and, enraged at the disappointment of being unable to reach home with the game as easily as he expected, he *fired his rifle at the pony, putting an end to its misery.*

"Now, what are we to do?" he asked. "Kin you carry that carkage?"

"No, certainly not," I replied; "and I shall not try."

"Neither shall I," said the hunter. "I can't be game-killer and pack-hoss both, but we must take home enough for our dinner. You kin carry that."

Phil then cut off about ten pounds weight from a hind quarter of the carcass, and gave it to me to carry. As we again started on our journey, he was in very ill-humour. The whisky was gone, and so was the most pleasant part of the emotions it had produced. He was annoyed at not being able to take home the whole of the buffalo calf, and apparently thought that I was to blame for his disappointment.

We were following no well-defined track, and on our way, rather than be continually listening to the grumbling of my companion, I kept forty or fifty paces away from him, generally to the right, and a little in the rear, so that I could follow him and not lose my way. As we were moving on in this manner, a large bird was startled from a tree, and flew nearly in a line towards me, and about fifty feet above my head.

Phil raised his rifle, and the next instant there was a strange singing noise at my right ear. Involuntarily I drew up my shoulder, shook my head, and brushed my ear as though driving from it a noisy bee.

The sound that had so strangely startled me was made by the ball from Phil's rifle, which had seemed to utter the word "ping" within an inch of my ear. The man was a good shot, and I could not believe that he had aimed at a bird far above my head and to my left, and that the ball would go so far from its mark. I believed that he had made what for him was a bad shot—that he had aimed at my head, and missed it.

"What is the matter, youngster?" asked Phil, as he saw the manner in which I had greeted the flying bullet.

"The ball came within an inch of my head," I answered. "Do you want to kill me?"

"It must have touched a bough of a tree and glanced off," replied the ruffian, as he commenced reloading his gun.

I was now near enough to the plantation to find my way back to it without his assistance, and remembering the warning Jake had given me the day before, I took the opportunity, while Phil was busily engaged with his rifle, to dart away, leaving my load behind.

I had got about two hundred yards away when I heard him shouting. I was concealed by the undergrowth of the forest, and, checking my pace so that my footsteps should not be heard on the fallen leaves, I glided on. I knew that Phil, in looking for me, would first go to the place where I had stood when he attempted to take my life. He would there find the buffalo meat and other articles with which I had been laden. He would then stand awhile wondering in which direction I had gone—listening with the hope of learning, and cursing me for not being present.

This time I endeavoured to make the most of, in increasing the distance between us.

Should he start in search of me he might not take the right direction, and even if he did, his pace might not be equal to my own. Describing a semicircle, I reached the line on which we had been moving, and hastened on towards the plantation at a speed that left me but little fear of being overtaken by my still half-drunken companion.



CHAPTER XIX.

OUT OF ONE TROUBLE AND INTO ANOTHER.

It was about two hours before sunset that I reached the plantation. Passing around a field where several of the hands were working, I reached the hut where I had seen Jake, without being observed by anyone except some women and children. I found Jake in the hut sound asleep.

"Turn out," I exclaimed, giving him a kick. In voice and action I had tried to imitate a slave driver, and was so successful that he instantly sprang to his feet.

"Golly, Master Fred," said he, with a strong expression of pleasant surprise; "you did that very

well. You might have called for an hour and I should not have heard you."

"Come on," I exclaimed, "we must start immediately. We have not a moment to lose. It is *now or never* with us."

"Why! what's up?"

"Phil has tried to kill me this day. I have reached here first, and we must be off at once."

"All right," said Jake, as he picked up a small bundle from a corner of the hut. "I'm ready, so just come along with me."

We went to the shore, where a small boat was lying under a shed made of broad-leaved bushes. It was launched without much difficulty, and we pushed off into the bay. As we did so I saw the overseer and two of the "hands" coming after us.

We were not more than one hundred yards from the beach when our pursuers reached it, and the overseer shouted to us to return, but Jake answered him with a shout of laughter.

When we had gained an offing of about half a mile, we could see that several others had reached the shore. By his red shirt I recognised Phil as one of them. There was the whizzing of a bullet close to my ear, and the sound was instantly followed by the report of a rifle from the shore.

When night closed around us we steered north, it being my determination to reach Mobile, as that was the nearest place from whence I could get to New Orleans with most speed. I did not expect to reach that port in our small open boat, yet hoped by its aid to place such a distance between us and our pursuers as would prevent our being captured and taken back to *the plantation*.

The overseer and Phil could have traced us on land, but they would be unable to do so out at sea. Should they follow along the coast, expecting us to land, they might look in the wrong direction, for we did not shape our course north until the night was too dark for them to see us. Our only fear was that the breeze that had sprung up with the setting sun might strengthen into a gale too strong for the boat to "weather."

Without exhausting ourselves by too much severe exertion, we continued rowing all night, although much of the time making but little progress, as the boat was constantly rising and falling on short seas. By daylight in the morning we could do but little more than keep the boat from being capsized. To remain out any longer was dangerous, so we pulled for the shore.

On nearing it we saw that the waves were rolling into a small bight not more than half a mile wide, and we went in with them. The bight became more narrow as we advanced, until we found ourselves at the outlet of a stream, which we followed up until we were able to land in safety.

Not until we were on shore, with the boat secured, did Jake expose the contents of his bundle. It consisted of some Indian meal cake, about two pounds of bacon, and a bottle of rum.

"I have been on the look out for sea-stores," said he, "ever since I spoke to you the other day, for I knew I should want them whether you went with me or not. You see this bottle of rum. It was Phil's. I took it out of his hut just after he went out with you yesterday morning. When Phil finds out that his bottle is gone, he'll feel perhaps as bad as I did when he was flogging me. I only hope he'll suspect which of us took it."

Hunger and excitement sharpened our appetite, and having discussed part of Jake's "sea-stores," we laid down in the shade for a rest. From this we were disturbed by hearing a noise near the boat. We turned round to see her pushed from the shore by a huge negro, and before we could reach the bank, the boat and man were far beyond our reach.

The negro was nearly naked, and the red blood was visible on his black skin, showing where he had suffered in his rapid flight through the bush.

There was an expression of immense satisfaction on his broad face as he saw that we were helpless, and could make no effort towards regaining our property. He was evidently a runaway slave from some neighbouring plantation, and glad of the means of baffling his pursuers by continuing his flight by water. Using an oar as he would a paddle, he started down towards the bight at a speed that soon would have taken him into the danger we had but lately escaped.

We followed along the bank of the stream and saw the negro reach the wide part of the bay where the water was rough, and where he appeared to have some idea of the danger of exposing the boat to the action of the open sea. He turned for the shore on the opposite side from where we were watching him.

In the forest behind us was then heard a low, long, deep sound, such as I had never before heard.

"Good God! Master Fred," cried Jake, "the hounds are coming, and we must get out of their way."

It was clear to me now why the negro had seemed so pleased at getting possession of our boat. He was being followed by bloodhounds, and the water would make them lose the scent.



CHAPTER XX.

A DOUBTFUL RELIEF.

NEARER and nearer came the full, deep baying of the hounds, till, following Jake's example, I got into a tree with large branches growing near the ground. We had not long to wait before the voices of the pack were apparently near the place where we had lost the boat. The deep bass voice of one then suddenly changed to a sharp howl or cry of distress.

"The leader has lost the track it's been following," said Jake, "and it's crying and swearing awfully about it."

Then came a succession of short and sharp yells.

"There, do you hear that?" continued Jake.
"The young dogs of the pack have found our tracks, and are after us."

Jake apparently had a good knowledge of the language of bloodhounds, for in less than five minutes four young hounds were whining and panting under the tree. Had we not been safe beyond their reach, in the excitement of the chase they would probably have tasted our blood on first coming upon us. Presently they were joined by another, apparently an older hound, that paid not the slightest attention to us, but was seeking for something else. It was the leader of the pack searching for the lost track of the negro, and it had followed the young hounds only when completely baffled in its pursuit.

The distress of the old dog was almost painful to witness. It was running about with its nose to the ground, seemingly quite frantic in its efforts to recover the lost scent. With a bound it started back to the place where the object of its pursuit had taken the boat.

Weary with a long run, the young dogs were disposed to consider the chase over, and remain satisfied with what they had already found. They stayed near the tree which protected us from their jaws, taking turns with each other in looking up, and expressing threats that were each moment becoming milder. I believe they knew that they were wrong, and would easily have made peace with us, had we been the first in making overtures for a treaty.

When we had been a little more than half an hour in the tree, we heard men's voices approaching from the direction in which we had lost the boat. Four *men on horseback* then rode up, accompanied by the

old dog that had previously left us. Interested as I was in any information we were about to learn from the men, I could not help observing the appearance of the dog. It was carrying the end of its tail between its legs, and was crawling along on half-bended legs, the most miserable-looking object I had yet seen.

The first business transacted by the four men was to flog the young dogs that had treed us, and while they were engaged in doing this we came down.

"Who are you, and where did you come from?" asked one of the men, after the young dogs had been taught something of the folly of disobeying an old one. The words were addressed to me, and I replied that I was a friend of Captain Weaver, and a visitor on his plantation; that the evening before I had gone out fishing with the servant now with me, and that we were driven from the coast, and had but just landed an hour before. I finished my story by stating that while we were having a little refreshment in the shade of some trees, a negro had stolen our boat, and set out with it across the bay.

"That explains the mystery," exclaimed one of the men. "I thought the black varmint must have taken to the water in some way, for I never knew Tiger lose a scent before."

The man then went to the old dog and began caressing it in a manner that plainly told me he was apologising for some fault that had been found with it not long before. The intelligent creature apparently understood him, for it immediately stood three or four inches higher, and began to exhibit a tail.

The four men then held a consultation as to what should be done, and it was decided that the hunt, for the present at least, should be relinquished. By the

time they could ride around the bight until the stream running into it could be forded with safety, the object of their pursuit might be several miles from the coast, in the stolen boat.

A long journey was before us—ten or fifteen miles north of our present position, yet our new-found friends insisted upon our accompanying them home. They said that we should have a journey of twenty-five miles in reaching Captain Weaver's plantation, and that out of respect to him they could not allow me to go that distance on foot. They proposed to take turns in allowing me to ride their horses, and promised that the next day we should reach home in comfort.

They would listen to no denial to this offer, and when I insisted on walking to the Captain's plantation they met my proposal by the difficulty of crossing the stream, or rather the bay. The road we wished to travel was north—the way they wished to convey me, and I was fairly compelled to take it, trusting to Providence for some way of escaping from them and continuing our journey.

I mounted a good horse, while its owner accompanied me for a mile or two on foot. The people of this world are far from being what they should be. Had we told those men that I was escaping from death, and Jake from slavery, they would have made prisoners of us, and we should have been returned to Captain Weaver's plantation, and to the care of the overseer and Phil. These persons were courteous and generous to people of their own class, but unmerciful to others. Perhaps they were not much to blame, for their peculiarities were the fault of education, and not of innate evil. Jake was a slave, or rather was the colour of one, and I was but a "poor white." Had

we told the truth, our story would not have been believed, and Captain Weaver would have been protected by them in his rights, as they would have considered them, by having us returned upon his hands.

By the time we reached the plantation from which the negro who had stolen our boat had absconded, I had given each of the four horsemen an opportunity of stretching his legs by a walk of a mile or two. My companion Jake had to perform the whole journey on foot. The difference in colour made the difference to me.

In the hunt the proprietor of the plantation had been accompanied by an overseer and two neighbouring planters. The residence of our host was a commodious dwelling entirely built of wood, the roof itself being formed of shingles of that material, shaped like slates. Before parting with the two planters who had accompanied him, a substantial lunch was served up by our host, to which, however, Jake was no party, though he was not overlooked, and found a plentiful repast among the coloured household. Both these gentlemen on leaving shook me cordially by the hand, and pressed me with true Southern hospitality to visit them at their own homes.

In the evening I was provided with a good dinner, and was agreeably entertained. The Southern planters are peculiar people, and to those who will take the pains to connect cause and effect, it will be evident that circumstances and peculiar education, including a strong conviction on the part of the whites as to the inferiority of race of the blacks, were the chief reasons why negro slavery became pre-eminently an institution in the South.



CHAPTER XXI.

A TOBACCO PLANTATION.

THE next morning I had an opportunity of viewing on a large scale the growth of that plant, which is more universally used than any other. Mr. Dayton, my host, was a tobacco planter, and while showing me over the plantation, entered fully into the history of the plant and its cultivation, the latter requiring much care. Early in the spring the seed is sown in beds, and when the plants have four leaves, they are transplanted into fields, and placed at a distance of three feet each way from one another. Owing to the destructive influences of the tobacco worm which lives upon them, the plants have to be examined morning and evening. When they have put forth nine or ten leaves, and stalks are beginning to form, the top of

each leaf is nipped off, so that it may grow thicker and larger.

It has by that time reached a height of a little more than two feet, and if the extremity of the stems were not nipped off, flowers and seeds would begin to form and drain the nutriment from the leaves, and stunt their growth. This is prevented by nipping off the stalks to prevent them from growing higher. This is called "topping" the tobacco, and it is better done with the thumb and finger than with tools. The fingers close the pores of the plant and prevent the juices from flowing from it, as is generally the case when cut by a sharp instrument.

The plants are not considered fit for cutting for preservation until the leaves become slightly brittle. After being cut two or three days, they are hung up under cover from the sun and rain to dry. When the leaves are quite dry, they are stripped from the stalks, made up into little bundles, which are placed in heaps in the open air, and covered with blankets to heat. They are then pressed into casks for exportation.

There is no substance, not even opium, upon which such strenuous laws have been made in prohibiting its use, as that of tobacco. Shortly after its introduction into the old world, the use of *Nicotiana*, or tobacco, was prohibited in most countries of Europe. Priests and physicians denounced it. It was made a capital offence by the Sultan Amurath, and the penalty for using it in Russia was to have the nose cut off. Pope Urban VIII. issued a bull threatening excommunication to those detected in taking snuff in church.

James I. of England raised the duty from twopence per pound to six shillings and tenpence, and then issued his "Counterblast to Tobacco," in which he declared

smoking to be "loathsome to the eye, hurtful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black, stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless."

Undoubtedly all these efforts to suppress its use assisted in creating the great and sudden popularity of the weed, and it is now said to be the "most generally diffused luxury in existence."

It is estimated that there are annually consumed by the inhabitants of the earth two millions of tons of tobacco ; enough to sink all the ships of the royal navy.

Tobacco is said by Charlevoix to be a word used by the Caribbees corresponding to our word "pipe," and that it was transferred by the Spaniards from the instrument to the plant; but although Humboldt repeated the tale, it is generally admitted to owe its name to Tobacco, a province of Yucatan, to the island of Tobago, one of the Caribbees, or to Tobasco, in the Gulf of Florida.

The name *Nicotiana* was given to the plant after Jean Nicot, the French ambassador to Portugal, who procured some of the seeds from a Spanish grandee, and sent them to France in 1560.

Tobacco was first brought to England by Sir John Hawkins, in 1565, and in 1584, two years before some say it was first introduced by Sir Walter Raleigh, a proclamation was issued against its use. It was afterwards extensively cultivated on the Cotswold hills, and the finest tobacco in the world was, and can, be grown in that locality. Its cultivation was, however, prohibited in 1684 by Charles II., and tobacco now produces too large an amount of customs duty to allow of any prospect of that prohibition being withdrawn.

Mr. Dayton was an agreeable sort of a man, not-

withstanding he had hunted a man with hounds; but that, as I have already hinted, was owing to the peculiar education of the South. After telling me that he was in no hurry for my departure, he added that he did not wish to detain me one hour longer than I wished to stay, and that means should be provided for me to reach Captain Weaver's plantation at any time I wished to start.

I told him as my absence might cause some concern, I should like to return as soon as convenient, and it was arranged that I should start that afternoon. I was to be accompanied by what my host called a "boy," who was to bring back the horse and mule Jake and I were to ride. The mule was to be for the use of Jake, not that his convenience was thought of the slightest consideration, but to keep him from making the journey in any way tedious to me.

Before parting with him, conscience almost tempted me to tell him the truth. Common sense, however, prevented me. It was evident that upon one subject my host, like thousands of others, was morally blind, and that should I tell him the truth, he could only look upon me as a vagabond—a "mean white;" and that he would only treat Jake as he would a runaway horse.

As we started from the plantation, I saw that the features of Jake were wearing a strange expression of doubt and fear. He was afraid that circumstances were compelling our return to Captain Weaver, and perhaps this fear was partly caused by my own troubled countenance, for my thoughts were disagreeably occupied by a little anxiety as to how we should safely get out of the position in which the course of events had placed us.



CHAPTER XXII.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

IN leaving the plantation to reach the road leading south, we had a distance of nearly a mile to make due east, the main road which we should then reach leading from north to south.

My first object was to learn if the negro lad who accompanied us knew whether we were to turn to the right or left on reaching the junction. Mr. Dayton had been very particular in giving me full instructions as to all necessary guidance, so that I might reach Captain Weaver's plantation without further inquiry. Each turning had been mentioned, and the distances between any two of them marked down on paper.

As we drew near the junction, I asked the "boy" who accompanied us if he knew the way to our plantation?

"Yas, mas'er, I tink so," he answered, "but I war nebba dar. I de'say we shall find um easy enough."

"*I have no doubt of it,*" I replied, "for Mr. Dayton

was very particular in describing to me every turn and peculiar point of the road, and I do not see how it is possible for me to make a mistake, but I was in hopes you might know the way also."

"Yas, so I does wall enough for four or five milds. After that I'm not sure."

Soon after we reached the main road, and I turned to the left with my horse at a sharp trot, leaving Jake and the other lad behind. I had got nearly a quarter of a mile on the road to the north before they overtook me with the mules at a gallop.

"Dis is not der way, I should go," exclaimed the boy. "It's to de souf."

"Did your master tell you the way?" I asked, speaking in a sharp tone.

"No, sar," he replied.

"Then I shall take the way he told me, and neither of us can be wrong."

I once more started on our journey, and the next time I caught Jake's eyes, he gave a knowing smile, showing that he saw which way the wind blew.

About two miles on the main road we came in sight of another large plantation. I believe it belonged to one of the gentlemen we had met at Mr. Dayton's the day before; but not wishing at present to accept the invitation he had given me, we passed on.

We made that afternoon and evening a distance of some thirty miles, and then stopped at a tavern in a little village consisting of fifteen or twenty houses. Before turning in for the night, I bade Jake keep a good watch on the youth who had accompanied us, and see that he had no communication with anyone without learning something of its nature.

In the morning I admitted to the negro that I had

taken the wrong road ; that, as shame prevented me from returning to his master, I should return by water in a small coasting vessel that was expected to call off the village the next day. I concluded by urging him to start home immediately with the horse and mules. After a little hesitation he obeyed, and Jake saw him well out of the village without giving him a chance of communicating any suspicion he might have of our attempt to deceive his master.

Thus far in making our escape, we had been very successful, but there remained the necessity of our moving on without the least delay. At the tavern where we stayed during the night, I made inquiries as to the best manner of reaching Mobile.

"It's a long journey by land," said the landlord, "a three days' hard travelling with a good horse, and you had better wait three or four days and go in our ship. It is loading now, and the captain can take you as a passenger. You had better see him. I'm expecting him here every minute."

I was agreeably surprised to learn that a ship was about to sail from such an insignificant desolate place, and sat down to con over a three weeks old New Orleans paper till the arrival of the captain.

He soon made his appearance, and in the course of our talk I learnt that what the landlord had called a ship was a small schooner, lately launched near the village, and now lying half a mile down the bay.

The three or four hundred people, white and black, within four or five miles of the village, were very proud of the fact that the village was about to rank as a port, and from all I was told they were expecting that it would become within a few months a place of some importance.

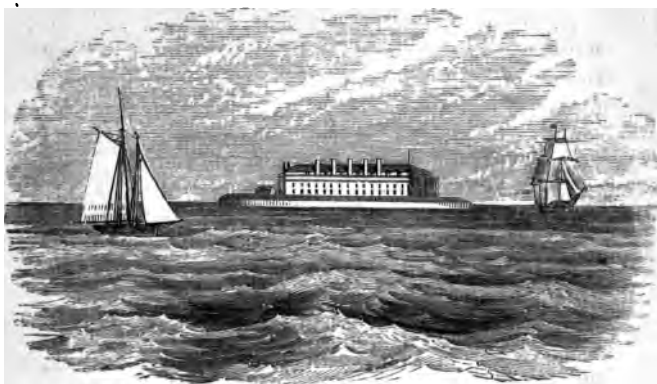
The captain, who had been my guest at lunch, invited me to go on board the vessel. Immediately on placing my feet on the deck of the little schooner, I was accosted by an old acquaintance. It was Robinson, the carpenter of the ship in which I had left London. We were at the place where he had landed in the boat from which Captain Weaver had stolen the two negro fishermen, and where he had been living ever since. He had become a person of some importance in the place, having built and successfully launched the first vessel to sail from the port, a feat that was to lay the foundation of the future greatness of the embryo city. He was first mate of the little schooner, and was much respected by all in the neighbourhood.

"I have been earning high wages for some time past," said he, "and have saved my money."

I told Robinson all that had happened since seeing him last, and of my anxiety to reach New Orleans as soon as possible; and, further, that I had only four dollars in money to perform the journey with.

"That is bad," said he, "very bad. You will be in luck if you get there in time to save your money, for people can't travel fast without paying for speed here as well as in the old country."

I was disappointed, for I had hoped that Robinson would have assisted me; but he merely asked where I was staying, and told me not to leave till he had seen me again.



CHAPTER XXIII.

ANOTHER VIEW OF PHIL.

IN the evening I had a visit from a planter, the owner of the schooner Robinson had just launched.

"I understand," said he, "that you have been for some time with the scamp who stole my two black boys, and that you have just escaped out of his clutches. Robinson has told me your story, and I think we can do something to assist each other. That rascal has been thieving and robbing along the coast for two or three years, but no one could find out where he lived. You have been a kind of prisoner at his place, and have just come from it. The thief is found out now, and he must be caught. What did he do with my two boys?"

"He sold them in New Orleans, and stole from thence the mulatto lad who is now my servant."

"You have been the means of the thief being found out, and you shall have my assistance in reaching *New Orleans*; but we must break up his den first, or

put the government in the way of doing so. I want to go to Mobile to buy stores, and you shall go with me in the schooner."

Later in the evening I saw Robinson, who gave an explanation of what had appeared his strange conduct to me.

"There is no use in my trying to do anything for you, when there are others who are not only much better able, but willing. You are welcome to half of whatever I have got when no one else will assist you, and the best friend you have in the world would do no more for you."

Three days after we left for Mobile in the schooner. Before going, however, Mr. Sherman, the owner, whose guest I now was, gave notice to the nearest magistrate of Captain Weaver's proceedings, and despatched a message to the military and naval station at the Keys.

All the inhabitants for miles around assembled to witness our departure. Flags were flying, drums beating, shots were fired, and shouts reached us from all sides. The sailing of the schooner was the greatest event that had ever happened in the village, and was duly recognised as such by all the inhabitants, white and black. As we passed the point of land protecting the bay from the south-westerly gales, a vessel was seen only a few hundred yards from us, going south. I at once saw that it was Captain Weaver's. He had undoubtedly been cruising along shore seeking whom he could rob and what he could steal, and was now on his way home. He had evidently not yet gone to New Orleans. While these thoughts were passing through my mind, Robinson made the same discovery as to the schooner in view.

"That's Weaver's craft," he exclaimed. "I know her by the mainsail. The captain is looking after some more niggers."

Captain Weaver's vessel was "brought to," apparently with the intention of speaking to us, but our schooner was kept off as we took our course, and the two vessels became further separated each moment.

"If the loss of my two boys should be the means of bringing that rascal to justice," said Mr. Sherman, "I shall be satisfied, and think they have been well paid for. Had he not taken them, he might have continued his business for several years longer, but he can't now. We cannot spare the time now to go to Mobile, but must change our course for the government station at the Keys. That villain must be caught now or never, for a better chance may never happen."

After a short consultation with the captain, our course was changed to due west, as though we were intending to cross the Gulf. Late in the afternoon, when we had gained a wide offing from the shore, we tacked and ran south. At sunset the breeze became fickle, and then set in steadily against us. We were four days in making a voyage that in favourable weather might have been performed in thirty hours.

On reaching the station at the Keys, we found a fort containing seventy-five or eighty soldiers, a small sloop well manned, and a little gun-boat.

I went ashore with Mr. Sherman. We saw the commanding officer, and I told him all that I knew of Captain Weaver's thefts, murders, and work at wrecking.

"We have known that these games were going on in the neighbourhood for some time," said the *commandant*, "but could not gain the slightest knowledge

of where the guilty parties could be found. It was supposed that the vessel belonged to Mobile or New Orleans, and every effort has been made at both places to trace her. The idea of the thief and wrecker being a planter living on the coast never occurred to us. You have brought me good news, and a well-armed party shall be despatched immediately to capture the fellow and his gang."

I was silly enough to expect we should be under way again in an hour or two, for I had not yet learnt what a naval officer means by immediately.

The next morning a deputy-sheriff from the county in which Mr. Sherman resided arrived, with an order from a United States marshal commanding the officers of the garrison to lend their assistance in arresting John Weaver and all his accomplices. The attempt of Captain Weaver to rob me was fast bringing him into trouble.

That evening the expedition started. It consisted of the gun-boat well armed and manned, on board of which was Robinson, who was certain that even at night he could make out the headland protecting the wrecker's vessel from view and the gales from the seaward. The schooner slowly followed in the wake of the boat. Just before dawn we found ourselves entering the bight where we expected to meet with the wrecker.

At daybreak Captain Weaver's plantation was before us ; but as his vessel was not in the bight, if he had returned home, he had again put to sea immediately afterwards.

The deputy-sheriff was fully armed with all that was legally necessary for breaking up the den of thieves he was about to visit. Accompanied by

twenty men he went ashore, but it was noon before the party returned, and as they drew near I saw that the visit had not been for nothing. Phil, the overseer, and the driver, were all three aboard the gun-boat in irons.

Only a few weeks before some agricultural tools had been stolen from a plantation near that of Mr. Sherman's, and a negro had disappeared with them. The slave and the tools were now found, and also the negro who had run away from Mr. Sherman a few days before. He confessed that he ran away for the express purpose of finding Captain Weaver, who, as he had been told, took runaway slaves to the North and set them at liberty.

An officer and a few men were left in charge of the plantation, and the same evening I started again North in Mr. Sherman's schooner.



CHAPTER XXIV.

A ROW IN A COTTON GANG.

CAPTAIN WEAVER had sailed for New Orleans, and there was not the slightest chance of my reaching that city before him. My only hope was that I might get there previous to the arrival of the letter from uncle John. Indeed, the answer to my application could not reasonably be expected yet, and unless I met with some unnecessary delay there was a fair chance of saving my money.

I explained this to Mr. Sherman.

"There's plenty of time," he replied. "I'll go to New Orleans with you. Trust to me and you will be safe. I believe New Orleans is the place to catch that fellow in, and I am going to see it done. Furthermore, we must advertise this boy Jake that you have with you, and restore him to his master."

"I do not see any reason for this," I said; "we have no evidence that Jake ever was a slave. His language is not like that of the niggers. Besides, I first saw him as cook on board a vessel, working his

passage, as he believed, to Boston. What right have we to consign him to slavery? If you advertise for an owner for him, you will be sure to find one, whether the person has ever seen him before or not."

Mr. Sherman eyed me with an expression of surprise.

"Should you meet a stray horse in the street," he asked, "would you believe that it owned itself, or that it belonged to some one? Now would you try to conceal it from the knowledge of the owner, or would you take some trouble in assisting him to regain his lost property?"

I was silent.

"These are foolish questions for me to ask of you," he continued, "for you have been brought up in a land where people have peculiar ideas upon some things, and I don't suppose your disregard for the rights of others arises from any evil or selfish motives, but from ignorance."

I listened to these words with painful surprise.

Mr. Sherman in most respects was, I believe, an intelligent, honest man; one whose love of justice evidently compelled him to return Jake to slavery. He accused me of having no regard for the rights of others. What regard had he for those of Jake? We each believed the other to be ignorant of the first principles of morality.

"I don't know why I should not go direct to New Orleans," said Mr. Sherman. "It is only one hundred and fifty miles further than Mobile. My cargo will bring a good price there, and the stores I want can be bought cheaper. Then, too, it is the place where I am likely to find my darkies, and get hold of the thief who stole them."

On the third day after leaving Weaver's plantation,

we entered the Mississippi, and next morning found ourselves lying off the "Crescent City." As I was preparing to go ashore, Jake came to me and wished me good-bye in a very impressive manner, as though he expected we should never meet again.

"What have you got to say?" I asked; "what are you going to do?"

"It may be, Master Fred," he replied, "that I shall not see you again. I'm going to be off the first good chance I get, and that might turn up when you are away. I shall tell you nothing more, and then they cannot give you any trouble on my account."

Knowing Mr. Sherman's intentions, I advised Jake to leave on the first opportunity, and, if possible, to get on board an English vessel if he could find one where he would be received.

My first inquiry on reaching the shore was about the last mail from England. It had arrived five days before. I made a close calculation to ascertain the shortest time possible in which an answer to my letter for the money could be received. It could not have yet arrived. Another mail was expected the next day, and the draft from uncle John, payable to Captain Weaver, would probably arrive by it.

Late in the afternoon I returned to the schooner, where I found Mr. Sherman. He had been in the city nearly all day, and was just about to go ashore again.

"I can't find out whether that scamp has arrived yet or not," he exclaimed, on seeing me. "I have inquired at the custom-house, of the wharfingers, and of all the proper authorities, and they know nothing of Captain Weaver or of his vessel. It is possible that he has not yet arrived. You must keep a good

look-out for him. I'm going ashore again," he continued, "would you like to go with me? Let us go on a '*bender*.' It's not every day one comes to New Orleans."

I declined the invitation, and he departed to enjoy what he had styled a "*bender*" alone. After he was gone, I asked for Jake, and was told by Robinson that he had mysteriously disappeared. No one had seen anything of him during the afternoon. Two days passed, in which I remained on board the schooner. Each morning I got the New Orleans paper to learn if the mail from England had arrived.

On the third morning Mr. Sherman came on board early, bringing the English papers, which had arrived by the mail steamer during the night.

"You must be ashore by twelve o'clock," said my kind host, "and take a stand near the post-office with an officer. When Weaver calls for the letter, you can identify him and have him arrested. I will make all the arrangements. I have put two advertisements in the *Picayune*—one for my boys that were sold here, and the other for the owner of Yellow Jake."

When informed that Jake had left without giving an address, he pronounced that youth to be a confirmed thief—one who had dared to steal himself twice.

On our way from the schooner to the city, he informed me that he could learn nothing of Captain Weaver's vessel. "It is possible," said he "that it is down at the mouth of the river, and that the scoundrel has come up in a steamer. Some one must watch the post-office every hour while it remains open for a week."

The first thing I noticed on landing on the *Levée*

was a gang of men working amongst an acre or two of large cotton bales. The cotton of the finest quality, known as Sea Island cotton, is the produce of the *Gossypium herbaceum*; but there are, also, shrub-cotton and tree-cotton, all cultivated in the Southern States. The cotton bales were apparently very heavy and difficult to handle without a little ingenuity. Each of the gang was provided with hooks, each having a handle at one end, and the other pointed, so that a good hold can easily be obtained by inserting it into the sacking. With this instrument a man can turn over a bale more easily than two men could do it in any other manner.

Two of the cotton-heavers, as the men are called, were quarrelling, and just as we were passing them, they made a rush at each other, armed with the cotton-hooks. A thrill of horror ran through me at seeing two human beings assailing one another with those sharp-pointed, strong-handled, steel hooks.

I saw each of the men strike the other, not with the apparent intention of giving a blow, but of catching his antagonist with the hooks. The fight had its fascination, nevertheless; and I believe it was impossible for Mr. Sherman, and some others who were looking on, to keep their eyes off the two men. As for me, I found it equally impossible to watch them. The last I saw of the fight was that of one man trying to assist the other to his feet by lifting him up with the hooks that were inserted under the shoulder-blades. The fight was soon over after this, and was brought to a close by the half-suspended man uttering the word, "enough!"



CHAPTER XXV.

ALL IN VAIN.

FIRST we went to the mayor's office, where Mr. Sherman had a long talk with that gentleman and an officer of the court. On his joining me, I was told that it was too uncertain whether Weaver was in the city or not, for an officer to spend his time in watching at the post-office with me, but that if I wished to save my money I had better not neglect to do so myself.

"Should you see him," said Mr. Sherman, "follow him. Run him to cover, and then give me notice directly. I shall be found at the St. Charles, if not on board the schooner. Come around to the St. Charles this evening after the post-office is closed."

With these instructions I departed, and took up a station near the principal entrance of the post-office,

where I could see all who came. Never had I been so lonely. A busy throng was constantly passing, and I had nothing to do but to look at them. Under other circumstances it might have been amusement, but I now thought my employment the most wearisome that man ever performed. Two hours passed, and I could see men leaving the post-office with letters bearing foreign postage-stamps. These men were unmistakably English and Irish in appearance. The English mail was therefore being delivered. The letter from my uncle John might then be lying in the office. The sun was very hot, and I was thirsty; yet dared not leave my station one minute. In my absence, Captain Weaver might come and obtain the letter without my seeing him.

There was not the slightest evidence that the Captain had yet reached New Orleans. In fact, there was some reason for thinking that he had not, for nothing could be heard or seen of his vessel. I began to feel very much like a fool, and later in the afternoon was only prevented from leaving my station by the fear that Mr. Sherman would blame me for doing so.

I was at last relieved from agony by seeing the office closed from the general public, and I hastened to the St. Charles hotel. I found Mr. Sherman under the verandah, and my burning thirst was relieved by imbibing my first mint julep, which seemed to me a nectar fit for the gods.

That evening I proposed to Mr. Sherman that word should be left at the post-office that anyone asking for letters for Captain John Weaver should be arrested.

I urged that what I had seen of the Captain's crimes justified this course, and that by following it

should save myself the agony of watching any longer. Mr. Sherman had several objections to this plan ; one being that if the captain were arrested before the draft was paid, I should not get a penny of the money. The draft could only be cashed to the captain, and he would not draw the money for my use after my being the means of getting him into trouble.

Overruled by his objections, I once more took my station at the post-office. After two hours more of watching, I was too disgusted with the business to follow it any longer. I entered the office and asked for letters for Captain John Weaver.

"Where do you expect letters from?" asked the clerk.

"One from London, England."

"It was delivered to order yesterday," said the man, as he resumed the occupation from which I had interrupted him.

I hastened to the St. Charles, but Mr. Sherman had left the house an hour before. I then went on board the schooner, and learnt that he had just gone ashore with the chief officer. It was not until the afternoon that I succeeded in finding him.

"We have been acting like fools," he exclaimed, when I told him that the letter had been delivered. "The captain is sharper than I thought, and the chances are that he will escape us, and take your money with him."

Bidding me follow him, he hastened into the street. We went into the nearest bank, and Mr. Sherman inquired of a clerk what banks in the city accepted drafts from banks in London.

"I believe there are only two," answered the clerk ; ourselves and the bank of Louisiana."

"I wish to know," continued Mr. Sherman, "if a

draft for two thousand five hundred dollars, or thereabouts, payable to John Weaver, has been presented here yesterday or to-day."

The young man told us that such a draft had been presented, accepted, and paid in due course that morning. The captain had got the money, and would undoubtedly leave the city without being caught.

The next day, while Mr. Sherman was purchasing stores I amused myself by walking about the city. The third municipality, where most of the inhabitants are of Spanish descent, is the most interesting part of it. It is the favourite resort of the sailors visiting the port. The gay saloons and gambling hells in other localities of the city which are patronised by the skippers, are seldom visited by the genuine tar.

I entered a house of entertainment much of the stamp of our London music-halls, where, while discussing a sherry-cobbler and a cigar, a ballet may be witnessed in which female creoles exhibit the national dances of the country. Amongst the audience, in full enjoyment of the scene, I recognised Tony, the Maltese sailor, who confirmed Mr. Sherman's conjecture as to Captain Weaver's having anchored in a bight near the mouth of the river, and coming on in a steamer.

Tony's application for his discharge had been refused, and he had run away. I mentioned my desire to find Captain Weaver, and was told that the latter had assuredly sailed; that he only came to the city for a day or two, and that any attempt to find him in it now must result in disappointment.



CHAPTER XXVI.

CAOUTCHOUC.

I LEARNT from Tony that he was going to call the next day on the English Consul as a distressed and shipwrecked seaman, and obtain from him an opportunity of sailing for London. He advised me to accompany him. There was a ray of hope in this,—a chance of my once more reaching home and beginning the world anew. I met Tony on the Levée the next morning, and we went to the British Consulate. We were kindly received, but the Consul said all that he could do for us would be to ship us on board the first English vessel leaving the port.

I told him that I was not a seaman.

"No matter," said he; "if you are anxious to go home you can do something to earn your passage. You are young, and apparently healthy. Work will do you no harm."

The next day I bade Mr. Sherman and Robinson

good-bye, and went on board a brig bound for the coast of Honduras, and from thence to London. My name was entered in the articles as an ordinary seaman, and I found but little difficulty in performing the duties required of me. Four days after leaving New Orleans we anchored off Balize, where we sent ashore several tons of cargo, and then sailed for Truxillo to take in freight for London. Bluefields, where we anchored, is a collection of bamboo houses, with the exception of a few other buildings, principally used or occupied by English merchants.

The work of taking aboard cargo immediately commenced, and was performed by the natives. Our freight consisted mostly of dye-woods, of which there were several kinds. Besides this, we shipped about three tons of Caoutchouc, or India-rubber. I had left London for the purpose of learning something, and was now determined to do so. I made inquiries of the officers and natives, and took some trouble to acquire a little knowledge by my own observation. In this manner I learnt something of the history and nature of that strange substance which, like thousands of other interesting natural productions, I once thought beneath my notice.

The second mate of the brig had been trading to Central America for several years, and had obtained much general information concerning the trade in which he had been engaged.

From him and others I learnt that India-rubber, or caoutchouc (its Indian name), is a milky juice that flows from the wounded tissues of many plants found in both the Old and the New World. When drawn from the tree and held in vessels, the insoluble substance in the aqueous liquid rises to the top like cream

on a dish of milk. It forms about half the mass, and is a mixture of carbon and hydrogen.

In the year 1785 M. de la Condamine, a French Academician, endeavoured to make known to his countrymen something of the nature and properties of caoutchouc. He wrote a memoir upon the article, but it excited very little attention. It was not supposed that the substance could be procured in large quantities, or that it could be put to much practical use. About the beginning of the present century small quantities of caoutchouc were brought to England from India, but for thirty years the principal use made of it was that of rubbing out pencil marks ; hence it received the name of India-rubber.

Ever since 1842 the demand for caoutchouc has been constantly increasing, and 4,000 cwt. is now said to be annually imported into England from the province of Para, in Brazil. A still larger quantity is brought from India and Java. Indeed, Java sends us the most, but it is of an inferior quality to that brought from most other places, for the reason that it is more glutinous.

In the East the tree supplying the largest quantity is the *Ficus elastica*, a tree of the order Moraceæ. The *Siphonia elastica*, found in Brazil and Central America, gives the best kind of India-rubber now brought to Europe.

Caoutchouc is obtained with but little trouble by the natives of the countries where it grows. A trench is made in the ground at the foot of a tree, in which an incision has been made, from which the milky fluid runs into the trench, and when hardened is taken from it in a large shapeless mass. Sometimes they give the India-rubber of commerce the shape

of animals and other things, by making rude models of clay, which are dipped several times in the thickening mass of gum, and take a new coat each time. The model is then broken, and taken out in small pieces from a hole made for that purpose. In the masses of caoutchouc that have been procured from the pits at the foot of the trees, there are often found sand and other substances that have been placed in the pits as the milky juice was hardening, for the purpose of adding to its weight. Hence buyers now insist upon an allowance being made for these adulterations; and so those who live by gathering caoutchouc from the trees, do not receive so much for the proceeds of their labour as they might have done with a little more honesty. Only a small quantity, chiefly from South America, can be used without the trouble of freeing it from impurities.

There is much about India-rubber that is peculiar to itself. At 2° above the freezing-point it is as hard as wood. At the temperature of 100° , although its form is unchanged, it will unite with itself so perfectly that the eye cannot discover where a knife has severed it. After being brought to a temperature of 150° , its primitive appearance is altogether lost.

The first improvement made in the use of this substance was commenced by Mr. T. Hancock, in 1819. He invented a piece of machinery called the *masticator*, by which he worked fragments of India-rubber into large blocks and sheets. He also discovered that the article so manufactured could be dissolved in oil of turpentine.

This discovery led to the invention of the waterproof coat by Mr. Charles Macintosh, whose name is

now used to denominate the article, and has become a dictionary word with that signification.

Previous to 1842 no experiments made with caoutchouc could overcome three defects it possessed for mechanical purposes. It would become hard with a little cold, relax and become sticky with a little heat, and would dissolve in oil and grease.

These defects in the article were first overcome by Mr. Goodyear, an American, who took out a patent for India-rubber goloshes, now so universally worn.

Soon after this, Mr. Hancock produced what is now known as vulcanised India-rubber. The improved material, being found perfectly elastic, capable of resisting heat, cold, and solvents, and easily moulded to any shape, has been fast superseding the use of iron, wood, leather, and many other articles, for various purposes.

It is used for buffers of locomotives in place of steel springs; for valves, washers, and other parts of machinery, and is found much more effective than leather. After being permanently reduced to a melted state, it is the most useful lute that can be found for pneumatic machinery. Stoppers and stop-cocks lubricated with it remain firm and completely air-tight.

For tubes, and many other things connected with science and art, caoutchouc is now invaluable, and the uses for which caoutchouc may be profitably applied are constantly being discovered, so that its importation into England has quadrupled within ten years.

As the vast unexplored forests of America, and of the large islands of the Indian Ocean, must contain unlimited supplies of caoutchouc, it is not unreasonable to believe that it will be far more extensively used than at present. We may expect that ships will

yet be built of a substance that neither cannon-balls nor water can penetrate—ships that cannot sink by a collision, and that cannot go to pieces on a lee shore; and that *ebonite*, which is now used for combs, door-knobs, and ornaments, will be extensively employed in the manufacture of other useful articles.

An average-sized tree producing caoutchouc will yield from fifty to sixty pounds. It is not a tree that needs cultivation, and this quantity can be procured with not more than five minutes' toil.

In Assam, and some other countries where India-rubber is produced in rude masses, or as used in commerce, it may be purchased away from the coast at less than a penny per pound. Small as this price is, a mass of caoutchouc of a few pounds weight is valuable where labour is cheap.

When forming from the trees in the forest, it cannot be well protected against thieves. At a little village north of Bluefields I saw a notorious character publicly flogged with the cat for his robberies from those who were honestly trying to live by gathering caoutchouc. The man was a repulsive-looking creature, half Indian and half negro, and had long been carrying on his depredations unsuspected by his victims. He was at last discovered, and obliged to take to the forest and river for a home. While hiding from justice, he still followed the same business with partners, some of whom acted as "cat's paws," and others as receivers, and a large canoe-load of caoutchouc for some time had nightly been stolen from those to whom it rightly belonged. A day or two before our visit to the place the man had been caught, and was punished just after our arrival.



CHAPTER XXVII.

HOMeward BOUND.

WE were just starting for our homeward voyage as a boat hailed the brig, and presently several trunks and boxes were hoisted on board as passengers' luggage, belonging to a Mrs. Moody, who came on board shortly after with her daughter and servant.

The first mate was busy superintending the unfurling of the sails, most of the crew being aloft at the work, so I stepped forward with the second mate to assist the passengers in coming on board. The face of the daughter, the first that showed itself over the bulwarks, was the most beautiful one I had ever seen. I had never previously taken much notice of female loveliness; but as her face rose above the bulwarks, beautiful as the sun from the sea, like another Venus *rising from the deep*, instead of stepping forward and

assisting her down to the deck, I remained motionless, staring at her in a manner that was undoubtedly *gauche* and rude. I was suddenly aroused from a state of semi-unconsciousness by being pushed out of the way by the mate, who caught hold of the young lady and placed her gently on the deck.

Mrs. Moody came next, and received the attentions of the officer, who conducted the mother and daughter to the cabin that had been prepared for them. Mr. Barry, the mate, left me to look after the servant, if I pleased to do so. She was about forty years of age, and was far, very far, from being lovely, or even good-looking. She was much worse than plain. I was not a second in deciding what to do, and in that brief period of time many thoughts passed through my mind. I would not act like the second mate, although for the manner in which I had just been treated, there was a strong inducement to do so. I assisted the servant in reaching the deck, and while doing so I saw the young girl, Miss Moody, turn an eye towards me.

I was annoyed and humiliated at the rude push by which the officer had moved me out of the way. I knew that my face was burning with a sense of shame. I felt cruelly insulted, and was suffering under a strong desire for revenge. I could not forget my true position in life, and the harsh treatment of those under their command by the first and second mate was therefore peculiarly painful to me.

I was in the second mate's watch, and before we got the brig well out to sea I saw a ferry-boat that I should have thought was not to be seen so far out of the voyage. Perhaps it was an error that men generally are; but I am a sensible man, and in obeying orders I must not let my feelings be swayed.

ing the sudden dislike that I had taken to him. I may have been somewhat stupid in learning my duty, and perhaps I did not do my best in performing the little I did understand.

I know that while Miss Mary Moody was on the deck, my eyes were most of the time turned towards her. She was about fifteen years of age, and very beautiful. Mrs. Moody was the widow of a merchant who had established himself in business in Honduras five years before, and when nearly ready to return to Europe to pass the remainder of his days free from the cares of business, he was taken ill of fever and died.

One day Mr. Barry was assisting in preparing a sail for sending aloft. Throwing the end of a line towards me, he exclaimed, "Put that through the grummet." I had not yet learnt what a grummet was, and for a second or two I hesitated, trying to comprehend what he wished me to do.

I should not have done so. The wisest plan is always, in like cases, to confess one's ignorance and ask for information.

The mate had been annoyed at my stupidity several times before, and irritated at not seeing his orders immediately obeyed, he caught up the line and gave me a blow with the end of it. Nothing could have pleased me more, for a strong vindictive feeling had been burning in my mind ever since he had thrust me away from him in the presence of a young beauty who now occupied all my thoughts. "Now is the time for revenge," thought I; "*now or never.*"

Catching up the "lug" of the sail, I struck him a heavy blow on the head with the ear-ring. He fell upon the deck insensible. It was not until the mate

had for some time received the attention of the captain and steward, that he began to come round. They had leisure then to attend to me.

The captain was too sensible a man to put me in irons and give me a free passage to London. That, in his opinion, would not sufficiently punish me for the offence I had committed. During the rest of the voyage I was bullied by all the officers of the brig. I was made to perform extra and disagreeable duty. While others in my watch were smoking their pipes and "yarning" on the forecastle, I was employed in polishing brass, or performing some duty not really necessary, but given me as a punishment.

To have refused to obey orders would have resulted in my being flogged, and I was thus compelled to obey. I had agreed to work my passage to London, and as long as only work was required of me, I could not reasonably refuse to do it.

The men were my friends, and would gladly have saved me from much degradation if they could have done so, but they could not. Some of them advised me to refuse to do anything not usually a part of an ordinary seaman's duty, and to do nothing when the watch to which I belonged were unemployed.

"Why don't you take a rope's-ending like a man?" said one of the men. "If you can do it without giving in, they'll have to take you the rest of the voyage like a gentleman. You'll be a distinguished passenger, with some one to attend on you."

There was not a day on which I did not suffer more wretchedness from the degradation to which I was subjected, than any corporal punishment the officers could have given me would have caused; but

I could not follow the advice given me by Tony and others.

There was one aboard of the vessel who must not know of my submitting to a greater humiliation than that of fulfilling my contract by working my passage home. I would have jumped overboard and been drowned before allowing any violence at the hands of the officers to be offered to me.

The vessel anchored off Cowes, and Mrs. Moody went ashore with her daughter and servant, intending to go by the steamboat to Southampton, where she would remain for a few days before taking the train for London. I tried to learn their town address from the old servant, who had always been very civil to me, but she did not know it. They left me suffering under the fear that I should never again behold the girl whom I had almost learnt to worship as a divinity. As she went over the side her eyes were turned upon me, and I thought I could read in them an expression of pity. I did not want that; and a feeling, almost of dislike, for a moment got possession of me.

Never until that moment did I fully understand the power held by one who possesses gold, and never did I so fully realise the helplessness of one who has none, and has to barter time and liberty for food.

With the money I should have received in New Orleans, I might have been a passenger in the ship and conversed with Mary Moody daily. We should have been happy companions for each other during the voyage, and I might have accompanied her to London. Now as the boat pushed away, I was degradingly set to sweep the deck by Mr. Barry.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

DISAPPOINTED.

As soon as the other sailors stepped ashore at the London Docks, I followed their example, but was seen by Mr. Barry, who pointed me out to the chief officer, and I was called back.

"Come on—come along," said Tony.

I hastened on with the others without looking back, and just as we got outside of the dock gates Mr. Barry overtook me. He knew that having no wages to receive, I should not be present when the crew were paid off, and that he would probably never see me again.

"I am not going to part with you in this manner," he exclaimed, "for we have not squared accounts yet."

He was just on the point of striking me, when he

was prevented by some of the men, who declared that if he touched me they would not leave a sound bone in his body. He was obliged to leave, and content himself with the mortification and annoyance he had caused me during the voyage.

I promised to call on Tony at the Sailors' Home the next day, and started for Uncle John's chambers. He was just sitting down to business, and, contrary to my expectation, he seemed pleased to see me. Our first greeting over, he listened, apparently with much interest, to the narrative of my adventures in Florida.

"You should have stayed a while longer with Mr. Sherman," said he, when I had finished my story. "The pirate undoubtedly returned to his plantation, and was caught by those waiting for him. Had you stayed till the trial, your money might have been returned to you, but I suppose it is too late to talk about that now. I hope you have learnt a little something since you were away," he added—"something that will assist you to avoid trouble hereafter?"

"Yes, I hope so," I replied. "If experience in hardships and poverty can teach me anything, I should have a little more wisdom now than on leaving London. I have learnt one thing that may be of much use to me hereafter, and that is, never to go again on board a merchant ship as one of her crew, and thus place myself under the tyranny of brutes put in command over the men, and who are a disgrace to the name of man."

"That's right, Fred," said my uncle. "That resolution, if it is strong enough to be kept, is worth travelling and suffering much for."

Before leaving, I obtained another supply of money, and the next morning got from an outfitter's proper

clothing. I then called a cab, and went down to "the Home" to see Tony.

My old shipmates had raised some money, and were on "the spree" in a public-house, with steps leading down to the river. Tony was quite as bad as any of the others. He had sailed many voyages in English ships. They all seemed pleased to see me, and wished me to join them. This, to a certain extent, I could not avoid, so called for glasses all round.

Having resolved that nothing should ever again induce me to go to sea as a common sailor in the merchant service, I saw no reason for acting like one on shore, so I declined spending the day with them, as it was evident that the only pleasure they had in view was drinking and smoking to excess. None of them had the sense to approve of my resolution; but, on the contrary, they treated it with ridicule.

"Thinks too much of himself," said one.

"Yes, too much of a swell," said another. "I wonder what he came here for?"

Amid such remarks as these I left them, with the words "*now or never*" in my mind. I had conquered a strong temptation to evil, and was quite proud of having done so, although I perhaps might never see Tony again. He was a good-hearted fellow, and one who had often proved himself my true friend. Indeed, he had saved my life. Still, the time was come when we must part. I could not often be in his company; and, much as I valued him, I could no longer be his companion. His path through life lay in one direction, and mine in another. It was his business to earn a living by following the life of a seaman, and mine was to make myself worthy of and to find Mary Moody, or to forget her.

I had understood that Mrs. Moody was going to London, and I thought it very probable that the captain of the vessel in which we came from Honduras might be able to give me her address.

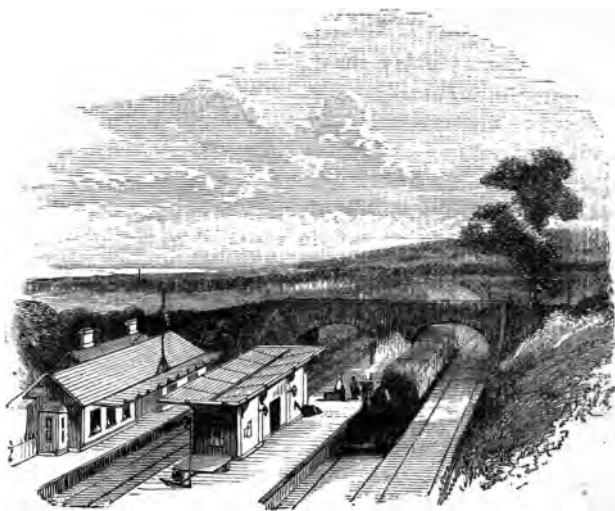
On my way west, I called at Lloyd's, and asked for Captain Grey. He was in what is called the "Captains' Room;" and after finding him, I had some difficulty in making him understand where we had met before.

"Well: what do you want?" he asked, when I had made him cognisant of the fact that I had worked a passage with him from New Orleans.

"I wish to learn the address of Mrs. Moody," I replied, quite confident, in my ignorance of the world, that I was asking nothing more than one gentleman might reasonably ask of another.

The captain stared at me for a moment with an expression of surprise, and then answered, "I dare say I could gratify your curiosity with a little trouble, if I saw sufficient reason for doing so; but I don't. I do not understand, as a stranger to me and to the lady, what right you have to ask me; neither do I wish to know."

The captain took up again the paper, the perusal of which had been interrupted by the interview he had given me, and there was nothing left but to bid him good morning, and retire. At the moment I felt that he remembered only the degrading position I had held aboard his vessel. I was too young and ignorant of the ways of the world to see that, as a gentleman and a man of honour, he could not have acted otherwise, and I took that for an insult which was simply a matter of precaution on his part. The lesson has not been lost upon me.



CHAPTER XXIX.

OFF AGAIN.

For the present, therefore, I had to give up all hopes of finding out the address of Mrs. Moody ; and having nothing better to do for a time, I called every morning, after breakfast, upon my uncle, at his chambers in Lincoln's-inn-Fields.

Uncle John was anxious to learn what I was going to do—what occupation I intended to follow for a living ; whether trade or a profession.

“ You will have to do something, my boy,” he would say ; “ for your father did not leave enough to support you in idleness all your days ; and you have already made considerable inroads into what he did leave you.”

I knew that Uncle John was advising me for the best, and that, in being guided by him, I should be

acting in a sensible manner ; but I was not yet willing to forego my earnest desire to see more of the world ; my curiosity about uncivilized and half-civilized lands had become quite part of my nature, and my trip to America had by no means quenched that desire.

Several weeks passed, in which I was constantly calling upon Uncle John for further advances of money. He never refused me, but always reminded me that I was paying twenty per cent. on nearly all that he let me have ; and that my *honour* was his only bond ; for as an *infant*, as the law considered me, I could not be sued for debt.

"Frederick," said he, one day, "I'm aware that you are not yet cured of your disposition for rambling about the world. For several days I have been looking out for a chance for you to see a little more of it without quite so much expense as you were at in your last trip, and I have been successful. Would you like to go to the western coast of Africa ?"

"Yes, uncle," I replied ; "any place where I have not yet been ; any place but New Orleans, Florida, or Central America."

"I am acquainted with the commander of a vessel about to sail with stores for the garrison of Bathurst, and you can go with him as clerk. Your salary will not be much the first year, but in the situation you can see something of a foreign land without spending the rest of your money."

There was nothing to detain me in England, so Uncle John's proposal was accepted at once. I had but a few days for making preparations for the voyage.

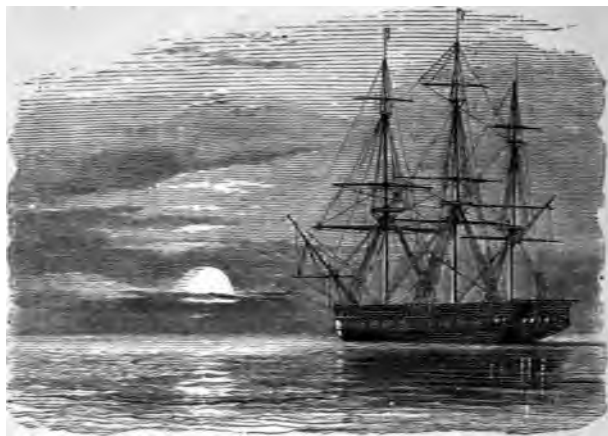
The vessel was to sail from Portsmouth, and after putting off the time for my departure from London

until the last minute, I started in a cab loaded with luggage for the Waterloo Station. Uncle John would not accompany me, yet I had nothing to complain of in his kindness towards me. Before parting, he told me that should I want any money during my absence the captain would cash my order on himself.

At the Woking Station the up-train from Southampton stopped, so that the two trains were within a few feet of each other. A person at the window of the carriage in a line with the one I occupied attracted my attention with a bow and a smile. It was the servant who had accompanied Mrs. Moody and her daughter from Honduras. Immediately following this discovery another face was seen at the window. Hardly conscious of what I was doing, I sprang to my feet and tried to open the door. It was locked. At that moment the train started, and I was borne rapidly away.

For a while I was nearly frantic in the agony of indecision, striving to conquer an inclination to turn back the next time the train stopped. At last I had the sense to perceive that, even should I return to London within an hour, I should have no better chance of finding Mary Moody than on first landing in London from the ship, and even if I were certain of meeting her by turning back, that I had no right, as a stranger, to force myself upon her notice. Yet there was something not displeasing in the memory of this last meeting with Mary Moody.

I had uttered the name of Miss Moody while trying to open the carriage door. I distinctly remembered that she rose from her seat, that she suddenly changed colour, and that the expression of her face was one of pleasant surprise.



CHAPTER XXX.

LIEUTENANT WARNER.

My labour as captain's clerk for three days before the ship sailed did not give me a very favourable impression of my chance for an agreeable voyage. I had many letters to write and copy, tradesmen's accounts to examine, and many commissions to execute, that kept me employed early and late. I was told, however, that I should have but little to do when once out at sea, which proved to be the case.

Just as we were weighing anchor for a start, the surgeon came aboard. He was a young man whose face, though changed by the addition of a beard, was familiar to me. It was Banks, the medical student, who had accompanied me to the Continent. Immediately on recognising me he rushed forward and grasped my hand.

"Fred, my friend," he exclaimed, "I'm delighted to see you. I've been trying to find you ever since

the night I tried to give a grand dinner to my friends at your expense. There's not a person in the world I respect more than I do you."

I had nothing in particular to say to Banks in answer to this, and as he seemed willing to do all the talking, I allowed him to have his own way. He told me that my leaving him in the lurch about the dinner brought him into great trouble and ridicule, for which he was truly thankful. "That taught me a lesson," said he, "that will benefit me through life; and if I escape being a disgrace to my family and country, I shall ever believe that the credit is due to you for saving me. Ever since that night I have tried to live within my income, or rather, allowance, without sponging upon my friends. My father has just got me appointed surgeon to this ship, and I cannot give utterance to my goodwill towards you in any stronger language than by expressing the hope that you may never be one of my patients."

The vessel was in the command of a lieutenant of H.M. Navy, a man of about fifty years of age, and who, without merit or patronage, had slowly been pushed into his present position by the gentle force of mild circumstances. He could think of nothing else but etiquette and discipline. So much had his whole soul been absorbed in the study of them, that he had neglected everything else, and thus destroyed all chance of succeeding in his profession. No man can succeed in any occupation where skill and brains are required, who has a soul that can be driven frantic at the sight of an unpolished button, or annoyed by a shirt-frill that seems endowed with a will of its own.

Lieutenant Warner was well pleased with his position, although he never forgot to tell us each day that

only a strong duty he owed to the service compelled him to take it. He was now a commander, in place of being an inferior officer of the vessel. He sat at the head of a table, and as he was never happy without an audience—without pupils to whom he could teach his rules of etiquette—the first officer, Banks, and myself were each day compelled to dine in his company. He would be just two hours over dinner—not a minute more or less ; and a hungry man could have eaten everything put on the table in two minutes.

Not a word was allowed to be spoken by either of us, but “Amen,” to the grace, uttered by himself.

He was very circumstantial, wandering, and irrelevant in his conversation, which was never instructive, or even amusing for its folly. He passed hours in trying to make us grateful for the opportunity we had of being educated into gentlemen under his example and instructions.

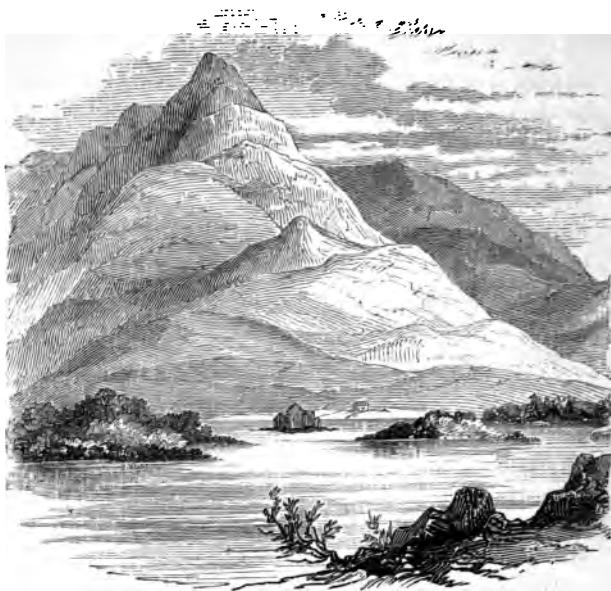
The two hours each day at dinner were even more tedious than those I passed while watching for Captain Weaver at the post-office in New Orleans. There I could be amused by gazing on those who were passing by ; nor was I compelled to listen to platitudes delivered in a slow, hesitating, drawling manner ; and there was no one there trying to teach me deportment and the art of dressing. If Banks or I placed a hand or elbow on the table, if we did not sit perfectly upright, or if our eyes happened to wander from the table, the commander would make an impressive pause, and looking sharply at us, would call our attention to the fact that we had forgotten ourselves. Then he would return to the subject upon which he had been talking, with marked emphasis on the words, “As I was saying before this interruption,” &c., &c.

Every one in the ship disliked him, and with good reason. He was always finding fault with what no other officer would have taken the slightest notice of; and so intent was his mind in detecting little errors, that I believe he would more readily have overlooked in any of those under his command a real neglect of duty. Money, promotion, and respectable employment were undoubtedly very good things, but they were purchased too dear when received under Lieutenant Warner. He made our lives miserable. The man was fast driving us mad or silly. Had Banks and I been allowed to take our meals with the rough sailors in the fore-castle, we could have learned something from their conversation and been agreeably entertained, but not one original idea could we glean from the tyrannical idiot who made us the victims of his system of "converting us into gentlemen."

After several long conversations on the subject, Banks and I determined to leave the vessel on the first opportunity. We had come to the conclusion that we had nothing to lose by doing so. The situation of captain's clerk I did not think worth taking much trouble to retain. It certainly was not worth keeping at the sacrifice of all happiness.

"I came aboard this ship," said Banks, "for the purpose of getting away from home, and having a voyage at sea, and now I have nothing to lose by deserting. What little knowledge I have got of surgical science I can take with me. I have no fear of occupying a lower or a more uncomfortable position in my profession than I do at present, and therefore a change can do me no harm."

Accordingly it was decided that we should leave the vessel on the first favourable opportunity.



CHAPTER XXXI.

A VISIT TO ST. HELENA.

THE appearance of Bathurst and its vicinity did not give us a strong temptation to forsake the ship. There was nothing inviting about it. We could not remain hidden in the town, waiting the departure of the vessel, for the place was not large enough to conceal us. Had we deserted there, our only way would have been to enter the forest and live for a time with the monkeys.

While hesitating what we should do, we learnt that the vessel had been ordered south immediately, with stores for H.M. steam-frigate *Hercules*, now on her way to St. Helena, and so sudden was our departure,

that we had no opportunity of getting ashore after learning that we were again to sail. I had seen another part of the world, but was not much the wiser for it. The few negroes and their bamboo huts, a few sallow-faced English merchants and their long low wooden warehouses, were hardly worth while coming so far to see, while having to suffer the disagreeable lessons given by our commander during the voyage. To the delight of all on board the vessel, we left Bathurst and sailed for the south the same evening.

Lieutenant Warner was an ingenious man, with a brain fertile in producing "methods" and occasions for the annoyance of others. It is possible that he was acting under a strong sense of duty, which made him always on the look-out for some reason, however whimsical, for delivering a lecture and demanding the strictest attention to it.

Had he not told us daily that the sun rose in the east and set in the west, that day was not night, that honesty was the best policy, and other equally novel scraps of information, his company might have been a little more bearable. As it was, Banks and I were compelled to take a few more weeks' instruction from him, and each day, while doing so, our dislike to the man became stronger.

We found the *Hercules* anchored off James Town upon our reaching St. Helena, and an opportunity was again given us for going ashore, but not of escaping from the kind attentions of our commander. He would accompany us to Longwood, and to the place where Bonaparte had been buried. Thus all interest in visiting this romantic place was lost to us by being in the company of one so determined to make our visit only interesting and instructive after

his own fashion. I believe that before going ashore he had read up for the occasion.

"Do not think of going to Longwood without me," he told us before landing. "I have been here before, and a visit to the place with one who can show and explain all will be much more pleasant than you can otherwise make it."

He commenced with the beginning, telling us that St. Helena was discovered by the Portuguese in 1502, and that it had been in the possession of England since 1610; that the island was ten and a half miles long, and seven in breadth; and that its population was about five thousand five hundred souls. Then followed a long and more minute description of the place, in which the height of the mountains in the interior, and of the perpendicular wall this singular island presents to the sea was given, and succeeded by an account of its vegetable productions.

This done, he made a new start, and told us that when he was a boy there was a celebrated French general, named Napoleon Bonaparte. Then he gave us the history of that "most remarkable man" from his boyhood up to the time of his death, following up the whole by telling us that the remains of the "little corporal" were ultimately removed by the Prince de Joinville to France.

Any excursion on land is interesting after having passed several weeks at sea, but mine to Longwood was made disagreeable by the society of one for whom I could not avoid a feeling somewhat kindred to contempt. After following the example of all who visit Longwood, by each breaking off and taking away a small twig from Napoleon's willow, we returned to the town.

Being satisfied that by drawing on my uncle for money, I should not be asking a favour of Captain Warner, but merely be transacting a matter of business, I told him that I was in want of one hundred pounds.

"Your uncle told me," said he, "to let you have what money you might want, and I shall do so without asking any questions ; but at the same time I deem it my duty to offer you some advice."

The duty of course was fulfilled, and I had to listen for an hour to the assertion, given in fifty different ways, and repeated backwards and forwards, that young men could not be too careful of their money, and that often the possession of it was a curse instead of a blessing.

At the time of drawing this money I had hopes that Banks and I might be able to escape in some other vessel, or in some way remove ourselves from the care and tuition of our kind but foolish captain, but this hope we found it impossible to realise. St. Helena was little more than a garrison, and a hiding-place in it was not easily obtained. We tried to make a bargain with an old lady to conceal us until our vessel had sailed, but could not. She said that the authorities would "come down" upon her as soon as we made our appearance after the departure of the vessel.

Banks then tried to make an arrangement with the skipper of a Yankee ship bound for China ; but he would not even take us as passengers without our giving him some proof that we had the right to leave. So we were obliged once more to put to sea with Lieutenant Warner.



CHAPTER XXXII.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

THREE weeks after leaving St. Helena, we anchored near the mouth of the Quilla, a few miles north of Loango, and south of Fernando Po, on the African coast.

"If we are allowed to put our feet ashore here," said Banks, "I, for one, shall not come aboard again. Africa is 'a large country,' as our learned skipper has told us, so we shall have plenty of room to escape. I am willing to suffer anything but a longer imprisonment in the ship. Indeed this skipper and I must part, and to use your favourite expression, it must be '*now or never.*'"

We were to stay at this place until the next morning, and during the forenoon two boats were sent ashore, one for some fowls and other fresh provisions, and the other to convey the first officer, who was to make some inquiries of the natives. We obtained permission to go ashore with that officer, but were

not allowed to take any fire-arms, our cautious commander being afraid that we might get lost should we be tempted to stroll far enough from the village for the purpose of beating up game.

Soon after reaching the shore, we turned off for a stroll beneath the shade of some trees lying at a distance to the south of the village. As soon as we were concealed from sight by the bushes, Banks and I took to our heels, at a brisk pace, and were soon in the wilderness.

We knew that Loango was only about twenty miles away, and that it was sometimes visited by merchant vessels, chiefly in the Portuguese trade, by one of which we might hope to reach Europe or the East Indies, so as to be able to get back to England in due course.

About sunset we had already placed between us and the village a distance that left us no fear of being captured by our companions. Banks selected a ledge of rocks for our bivouac for the night—a place very difficult of access, and only to be reached by assisting each other. Here we were safe from molestation by wild beasts, the only enemies we had to fear. Indeed, the spot was well chosen, and of this we had sufficient evidence during the night by the roaring of a lion.

The creature had found our retreat, and, disappointed in not being able to reach us, he expressed that disappointment in deep, angry growls.

The sun rose bright and clear, and we rose with it, intending to resume our journey, but a low rolling sound, somewhat resembling distant thunder, at our feet, told us that with the night the danger that had threatened us had not passed away. We looked over the precipice and saw a huge lion gazing upon us with eyes expressing hunger and rage, so our journey was delayed.

The sun rose high in the heavens, and its beams came down upon us like flames of fire. We had eaten no food since eight o'clock on the morning of leaving the ship—a period of about thirty hours—yet we were not suffering from hunger. A raging, burning thirst prevented that. Never had I felt the sun so burning hot, and we could not obtain the least protection from it. The barren rock upon which we were standing formed a focus for all its rays.

Perspiration flowed from us in streams, and the raging thirst became fiercer and fiercer each moment. Exposed as we were to the rays of the sun, we were tantalised by the sight of a thicket not more than two hundred yards away. How we longed for the shelter of its trees, for water, for death—for anything but the horrible agony we were suffering! There was no hope of present relief, for under the shade of the rock the lion was patiently waiting for us to come down. Much of the time he seemed to be asleep, but occasionally he would rouse up, look towards us, utter a loud, prolonged growl, and again place his chin on the ground, and close his eyes.

Banks, apparently, suffered more than I did. When the sun was about two hours past its meridian, he became frantic. In a hoarse whisper he spoke of throwing himself over, and letting the lion put an end to his sufferings. I tried to comfort him, by saying that the sun would disappear in a few hours more; that the patience of the lion would wear itself out; or that an opportunity of escape would be opened up to us.

"No," he exclaimed; "something tells me that one of us must die here. Which of us, God only knows, and the lion does not care."

There was a strange expression in his eyes, telling

of physical suffering, despair, and madness. After raving wildly for awhile, he suddenly ceased, and became more calm, and seemed to suffer less; he talked with greater ease, as though his parched tongue had been moistened with water.

"Do you see that thicket?" he asked, pointing to it. "If the lion had you, he would drag you there, and make a meal of you, and I should escape. I have given you warning, so now look out for yourself. It is God for us both, and one of us for the lion."

"Why should both die, when one may be saved?"

I had thought that Banks was mad, but something told me now that there was method in his madness, and that his words were wordly wise. I did not believe that he could live twelve hours longer in our present position. I might not do so myself. There was no apparent prospect of the lion leaving us during the afternoon, and if he did not desert us then, there was no hope of his leaving us in the night. Probably he would try to reach us—a feat he would attempt in the night in preference to day. The creature might not have been hungry on first discovering us, and be only nursing his appetite. As these thoughts passed rapidly through my brain, I also became suddenly inspired with the conviction that it was better for one to be saved than for both to die.

"Now, then," exclaimed Banks, advancing towards me, "are you ready?"

I made no answer. In fact I had time for none, for he sprang upon me like a tiger. Catching hold of my body, he hurled me on to the brink of the precipice. I had just time to catch hold of him with both hands—one of them in the mass of curling hair I had so often admired. Seeing that I was not to go

over alone in that attempt, he moved from the edge of the platform, and used all his strength to disengage himself from my grasp, a feat which he accomplished only after a long and severe struggle.

The lion, aroused by the contest, kept his eyes fixed upon us, uttering loud roars, and lashing his tail, as he passed up and down at the foot of the platform. Banks had now become demoniacally excited. Every faculty of his mind was bent on the accomplishment of the one idea of forcing me over the ledge of the rock. The platform upon which we were standing was about sixteen feet in length; twelve feet wide at one end, and seven at the other, and one end about three feet lower than the other.

As we now stood facing each other, Banks was on the higher ground. He was also two inches or more taller than I, and in our next encounter I saw that he must have the advantage.

"Avast! Banks," I exclaimed. "Listen to me for one moment. If one is to die, let us cast lots."

He hardly seemed to hear this appeal, but rushed upon me. In size, strength, and will for this encounter I was far from being his equal, and his attack could only be successfully met by cool and deliberate precaution. As he rushed towards me, instead of rising to meet him, I threw myself suddenly at his feet, and he fell headlong over me, close to the edge of the rock. My being on the lower ground had been greatly in my favour; and by hastily rising to my feet, I could easily have thrown him over, but I did not attempt it. He arose, and again rushed towards me. His whole soul was intent on the struggle, and as he came towards me with outstretched arms and opened hands to grasp me, I closed my fist, and dealt him a blow between

the eyes. He reeled under the shock, and turned half round and fell. Stunned by the blow, he lay senseless for a time ; then staggering suddenly to his feet, he reeled, and fell headlong over the precipice.

The lion sprang upwards with a deafening roar, and caught Banks in his descent. Having first quenched his thirst by a draught of blood, he then dragged the body into the thicket. My sufferings from thirst and hunger were forgotten in the horror of that scene. Kneeling down and uttering a few words of thanksgiving for the mercy so wonderfully vouchsafed to me, I felt that this struggle had made me a wiser and a better man.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM AFRICA.

I was a deserter, I might have been a homicide; yet I felt how wonderfully I had been delivered from danger and from peril, when both seemed ready to overwhelm me. I descended from the rock a solitary wanderer in the wilds of Africa, not knowing whither to turn. I could not go back to the ship, and relate the horrible catastrophe which had just closed with the death of poor Banks. The sailing of the vessel no doubt had been delayed, and a party sent on shore were as surely then making a search for us; but much as I now regretted having left the ship I could not return to it.

I hastened southward, nearly frantic with the desire

of removing myself as far as possible from the scene. Nature seemed to have endowed me with more than human power of endurance. While exposed to the burning rays of the sun on the rock, I was dying with thirst, and was so weak that I could hardly stand. Now I moved over the ground with ease and speed that astonished myself. The sun went down, and darkness began to gather over the plain. The fear of having to be out another night caused me to continue my exertions, and just as it became so dark that there was much difficulty in keeping on in the right direction, I saw a light gleaming a few hundred yards away.

On drawing near it I was met by a pack of dogs that seemed ready to devour me. I was rescued from them by a negro, who conducted me to the fire, where I found several men and women having a feast. I snatched a calabash of milk from the hands of one of the women, and surprised every one present by the avidity with which I devoured its contents.

I was well entertained until the next morning, and then shown the way to Loango. In my desire to express some gratitude for the hospitality the blacks had shown me, I took out my purse and gave the two men who had put me on the track a sovereign each. The instant they saw the shining gold, both seized me. Resistance availed me nothing, and I was violently thrown to the ground, and my money and everything else taken from my pockets.


This robbery was committed with a show of animosity that seemed strangely inconsistent with the hospitable manner in which I had been treated by them. As long as they took me for a runaway sailor, as penniless as themselves they had assisted me and treated me with kindness; but the mere sight of gold extinguished

every charitable thought, and transformed them into demons and robbers.

I entered Loango without a shilling of the money lately received from Lieutenant Warner. The negroes I had just left would make me eat and drink with them, thinking I was a person in need of their assistance. They did so without the hope of reward. The Christian people of the town would give me nothing to eat because I could give them nothing in consideration, and I began to have serious thoughts about returning to the negroes in the wilderness, fearing that I must starve should I remain much longer with those who professed to be civilised people.

Before I had been twenty-four hours in Loango I began to hope that the vessel from which I had deserted might call at the place and give me an opportunity of leaving it. Even the tuition of Lieutenant Warner was more endurable than hunger. There was an English consul in the town, but I knew that he would look with disfavour upon any application I might make to him for assistance, as I was a deserter; and I had not confidence in my ability for deceiving others to go to him with any other story than the true one. However, my anxiety for the future was presently removed by the arrival of a large Portuguese ship, bound for Goa. One of the sailors could speak a little English, and with his assistance I made application for a berth on board the vessel. The captain seemed pleased at having an English sailor under his command, and, once more, I had a home.

My knowledge of a seaman's duty was hardly sufficient for what I had undertaken to perform. Aboard an English vessel my ignorance of a sailor's duty



would have brought me into much trouble. Every one would have had a feeling of ill-will against me for trying to obtain money that I could not earn. The men would have called me a "soldier," and would have told me daily that they were doing my work. It was different on this Portuguese ship, for I believe that they all felt pleased to find that I was but of little use on the vessel. It gave them a fine opportunity of claiming a high superiority over the English, and they made themselves quite happy in convincing me that, as a sailor, I was ignorant and unskilful when compared with Portuguese sailors. I would not tell them that I was not an English sailor, for I had claimed to be one in order to get away from Loango, and I did not wish to wound the vanity they certainly felt at their own supposed superiority. They seemed to pity me for my misfortune of having been born an Englishman, and in lieu of deriding me for my ignorance, all tried to rival one another in giving me such nautical information as they possessed. We reached Goa after a pleasant passage, during which I had been converted by the kind attentions of the officers and crew into a very good Portuguese sailor, with a strong love for chocolate.

I had but one subject for complaint aboard the Portuguese vessel, and that, with a strong English appetite, was a serious one. I was allowed but a very small quantity of food. A cup or two of chocolate, a small biscuit, some dried fruit, and a piece of dry salt-fish, occasionally varied by the substitution of coarse and hard salt junk, was supposed to be all the daily food we required. With this fare the Portuguese were quite satisfied. I was not, and whenever I made any complaint, I was sure to hear something

expressive of the belief that Englishmen, as well as most people from the north of Europe, were but little better than swine.

Goa is a city that has the appearance of having been for a long time dying of old age. Everything seems struck by the hand of Time, and to be suffering severely from the blow. The city is guarded by forts and castles, on which are mounted many heavy guns. It is situated on the river Mandova.

Joaquin, the sailor who could speak English, and I, left the Portuguese ship at this port with the hope of getting another that would convey us anywhere but back to Europe.

During the time we were in the city, we had no trouble in finding shelter. A great part of old Goa is in ruins. Churches, monasteries, and other buildings that once must have given the place an appearance of a fine city, are now falling in ruins, and afford free lodgings in abundance. A stranger, at first landing, is apt to think that the inhabitants of Goa are an indolent, passionless people, with too little energy to do much either of good or evil. Great deeds are performed under the inspiration of strong will, and the people of Goa appear to lack strong motives for doing anything. It is true that a majority of the population is engaged in business, but not actively. No one seems in haste. No one seems very happy or very miserable. The young are apparently as cautious and serious as the old, and all look as though their only business is to live through the day. But this has its exception. The people have some animation, but it is reserved for particular occasions, for saints'-days and holidays. It is for those days they wait, and each interval between them is but little more than a sleep.

On the fourth day after reaching Goa I was surprised at seeing the inhabitants of the city very gaily dressed, busy, and noisy. The place was all astir. Every man, woman, and child was wearing a pleasant smile. They walked fast and talked fast—in fact, all were excited. All the bells in the city were ringing. During the day I saw a rather imposing procession, perhaps little inferior to the Lord Mayor's Show in London—magnificent certainly for anything colonial. So much was my attention engaged in watching the spectacle, that I paid no attention to others around me, which, unfortunately, led to my falling into difficulty.

Something was being carried by to which great reverence was due, and I neglected to pay it. Others around me uncovered their heads and I did not. This fact was made known to me in what I thought a very rude manner. A young man, not much older than myself, took off my hat and placed it in my hand. I was about to resent the affront, but Joaquin pulled me gently by the sleeve, saying that I had no reason to complain.

"When in a foreign land," said he, "you must yield something to the manners and customs of others. This need not be done from cowardly fear, but from respect to the opinions of others."

I felt that the Portuguese was right. I had learned another lesson, and was not ungrateful for it.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

A VOYAGE IN THE DARK.

JOAQUIN was more fortunate than I. He had managed to ingratiate himself into the goodwill of a young widow, who sold wine and other refreshments, and, for all I know to the contrary, may now be the veritable owner of the inn and its pretty mistress. At all events, my companion at once cut my acquaintance, and, driven nearly to desperation, I went to the shore, succeeded in unmooring a dingy, and started for a small vessel on which, the day before, I had seen the *Union Jack* at the stern in all its glory. Before getting to the vessel two natives came after me, and although I exerted myself to the utmost, they gained on me so rapidly that their hands were on the dingy as it struck the side of the vessel. I lost no time in gaining the deck above.

“What do these fellows want of you? What have you been about?” asked a fellow countryman, coming forward as I climbed over the side.

"They want me to stop ashore and starve," I replied ;
"and all I have done is to borrow their boat for the purpose of escaping."

"But what has that to do with me or my vessel?" exclaimed the man, in an angry tone. "Go over the side instantly, or I'll heave you over."

This reception was not so pleasant as what I had hoped it might be, and while hesitating as to how I should act, the natives pulled off for the shore, taking the dingy with them. In vain the mate of the brig I had boarded shouted to them to return; they only shook their heads and exposed their beautiful teeth by way of derision. The captain had gone ashore with the only boat on the vessel fit for service, so the mate was compelled to allow me to remain.

While he was enjoying his siesta after dinner, I did a little "galley-ranging," and found some boiled rice, with which my hunger was somewhat appeased. When the captain came off in the evening, he proceeded immediately to get the brig under way, and in the bustle and confusion of this work I was forgotten by the mate, and was taken out to sea. Once more, then, I was on a voyage, I knew not whither. Perhaps we were bound for London, where my pockets might be again supplied with money.

Although afflicted with a little curiosity as to what part of the world I was going, I forbore to make any inquiries that night, wishing to be further out to sea before revealing myself to the captain; and therefore remained concealed under the long-boat till morning. Then I learnt that there were only seven white men on board the vessel besides myself. They consisted of the captain, two mates, a sailmaker and carpenter, and two quartermasters. The crew were natives of

Bengal, working under a Sirang, who understood English and received orders from the officers.

The captain was a man who had been to sea and about seaport towns for many years. His language was coarse, every sentence being ended with an oath. On seeing him the next morning, he cursed me for coming aboard his vessel, and abused his officers for not throwing me overboard before we sailed. When his passion had somewhat abated, he gave instructions that I should be made generally useful. Whenever either of the mates, or the carpenter, or sailmaker, could find any employment for me, they were to set me to work. I soon learnt that these orders were so faithfully executed that I had more work and less sleep than any other person in the ship. All on board took pleasure in concealing from me the port of our destination. On the third day out I ventured to ask the carpenter where we were going. The answer was to "the port of Timbuctoo." I had read a Yankee Captain's narrative of "ships of the Desert" going in caravans to that place, but I did not believe the brig we were on was bound for so shadowy a place. I asked the sailmaker the same question. "We are first going to call at port Point Chimborazo for orders," answered he. "The captain can't tell you more than that until he gets there." I had a distinct recollection of having learnt at school that Chimborazo was the highest mountain of the Andes, and I did not believe the brig was going up there like a balloon. Not yet satisfied, I asked the second quartermaster where we were going, and his answer was "Mount Tycho." Having read that a part of the name of the celebrated Danish astronomer was applied to a mountain in the moon, I did not believe that the brig was going there.

Before we had been out a week, I committed a blunder that greatly increased the animosity of all hands against me. There was a cask of water on deck for the use of the Bengalese, and being near it one day, and thirsty, I took a cup from the cask and drank it, instead of taking the trouble to go to the supply measured out for the use of the white portion of the crew.

The Sirang sprang forward, snatched the cup from my hand, and threw it overboard. His companions gathered around him, some of them coming down from aloft, and all of them left off work. My folly might have had serious results, for they thought it was a premeditated insult, and an attempt to make them lose their "caste."

When the captain was called, he ordered another cask to be brought up from below, and not until this was accomplished would any of the crew return to their ordinary duty. For the excitement and extra labour I had caused at an unseasonable hour, the prejudice existing against me was greatly increased. I had intended no evil, but thoughtlessness and folly are often the cause of great troubles. I had learnt another lesson. My education was progressing.

On the morning of the twenty-second day after leaving Goa, I saw that we were entering a harbour. By the time we dropped anchor several boats came off, principally manned by Chinamen. They were all anxious to earn a little money by taking some of us ashore, or by bringing anything off that might be required for the ship's use. One of them who came on board was most importunate and annoying in his solicitations. "Want boatee, pretty boatee?" he exclaimed. "Me damn good fellow—got good boatee."

The captain was somewhat of a wag. He wished to get rid of this man and of me also, and he resolved that we should travel in company.

"Here is a passenger of mine who wishes to go ashore," he exclaimed, pointing to me; "help him into your boat, and take him off with care and particular civility. Then, turning towards me, he added, in a low hissing tone, "Now you be off, or I'll have you sent to the calaboose."

I was quite as anxious to leave as he was for me to go, and lost no time in getting into the Chinaman's boat. It was manned by two men besides the surprising person who had, to the disappointment of many others, obtained me for a fare.

I had not a penny in my pockets, and not an ~~idea~~ to give the man for his trouble in taking me ~~ashore~~. Had the Chinaman been capable of understanding English perfectly, I would have explained to him the position I was in; and if a sensible, reasoning creature, he would have made the most of a bad bargain, and thanked me for the honour of my company; but I had sufficient knowledge of human nature to perceive that the creature who now had me in his possession could understand no other way of parting with European customers than that of receiving about three times as much as he was honestly entitled to for the use of his boat. As soon, therefore, as the boat struck the shore, I jumped out, and showed the Chinaman and his companions what I could do under a strong desire of moving from them as fast and far as possible.

I was pursued for a short distance; but having got quite away from my pursuer, I found myself free. Yes, free, but where?



CHAPTER XXXV.

MAURITIUS.

WHEN walking down one of the streets, after having assumed a free-and-easy sort of appearance, I met an English soldier in uniform. I asked him to tell me where I was. Evidently not understanding my question he replied—

"This is not a large town, and I should not think you could get lost in it without a dark night and plenty of fog. There is the quay, in this direction;" he pointed with one hand; "and here," he added, pointing with the other, "are the barracks. Which way, or where, do you wish to go?"

I must confess my ignorance some time, thought I, and it may as well be now. I told the soldier that I did not know the name of the town or even of the country I was in, and that I had a little curiosity to know. Probably thinking me inebriated or mad—perhaps both—with an expression of contempt on his features, the soldier turned and walked away without saying a word. I could not blame him, for he might well look upon me as little better than a fool, not to know the name of the land I was in.

By wandering about during the day and taking notice of all to be heard and seen, I learnt that I was in Port Louis, in the Mauritius, or "Isle of France." I was not particularly struck with the beauty of the place; and the view obtained from the deck of the brig of rugged mountain tops that seemed to cover the whole island, added to my first three or four hours' experience of life in the town, took some of the charming fancies out of my mind about the island that had ever been there since reading the romance of "Paul and Virginia." Scenes we behold are often coloured by the state of mind we happen to be in at the time of seeing them. Totally ignorant of the beauty of the inland country, I felt quite positive that scenes of rural beauty, such as St. Pierre described in his delightful romance, could not be found within many hundred miles of Mauritius. The enchantment that distance lends to the view had fled, and to me the Isle of

France was an unromantic place, like all others where people toil for money instead of happiness.

Again it became necessary for me to act—"now or never." I asked for the English consul, and not one of the four respectable-looking people of whom I inquired could give me the information. One of them directed me to a merchant having offices near by, and was quite confident that I should learn there all I required to know. I found the address, and entered the office, where two clerks were sitting behind a tall desk. An elderly gentleman was just preparing to leave the office as my inquiry for the English consul was made. He stopped, turned around, and stared at me, while a smile illuminated his countenance, in which there was an expression of much kindness. The young men too were apparently much amused with my question.

"This is an English colony at present, I hope," said the old gentleman, "and her Majesty does not require consuls in her own dominions. You will have to take a voyage before you can find an English consul." Never before was I so conscious of my own ignorance and folly. One moment's reflection would have told me what I had just learnt, and for the want of it I had asked a silly question, and was being laughed at for it. The lesson was not lost. What I lacked in wisdom, I determined to supply by cunning, in denying all knowledge of the land I was in. This I succeeded in doing so well that the old gentleman stopped to hear my story, and appeared to be much amused at the idea of my being landed in a country of which I had not the slightest knowledge, being even ignorant of its name.

After telling me to call at the office again in two hours' time, he went out and I immediately followed.

him. After wandering about the city for some time, I returned, and found the merchant apparently waiting for me. He took me into his private office, and then wanted to learn my story, and what I expected from an English consul, had I succeeded in finding one. I told him that I required some assistance in getting home to London, and a consul might have been able to get a ship for me.

"Have you any relatives in London?" he asked.

"Yes; an uncle."

"What is his name and business?"

"John Lonsdale. He is a solicitor, and has offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields."

"When did you see him last?"

"Nearly a year ago," said I, determined to answer no more of what I thought insolent questions.

"Yes," he replied, "I should think that was just about the time I saw you there. I remembered your features when you first came in to-day. I was in London a year ago, settling some business in which I required the assistance of your uncle for several days."

This was good news to me, for I was quite certain, after learning what he had, that he would give me some assistance. I was not disappointed, for I left the office with money in my pocket, leaving behind a draft on my Uncle John for £75.

As I sat in the cool shade under the verandah of the hotel, enjoying a Manilla cheroot after a good dinner, I felt a little better satisfied with Port Louis. Gazing upon the hill-tops in the east, upon which the setting sun was reflected, I could not doubt but that there were lovely quiet valleys between them, where scenes of rural happiness and sweet childish simplicity

might be found equal to anything described by Barnardine St. Pierre.

I might well be excused for inquiring for an English consul in Port Louis, for the place has but very little appearance of being an English colony. It was first discovered in 1505, by the Portuguese, from whom it was taken by the Dutch, ninety-three years afterwards. The latter called the island Mauritius, after Prince Maurice. Subsequently the French did something towards colonising the island, and in 1810 it came into the possession of the English, since when it has been famous for the coffee it produces, as also for sugar and ebony, which are its chief exports.

Only about one out of ten of the population of upwards of 800,000 is white, and the rest are negroes and hill coolies. I was but a youth, ill-taught, and ignorant, having no knowledge of any branch of natural science. So Mauritius did not possess attractions sufficient to detain me a day longer than was necessary for getting a passage away from it. The glories of its scenery, its vegetation and geology, were but a sealed book to me. The day after landing in Port Louis found me busy searching for some way of leaving it. I began to understand now that, ignorant as I was, I had better have remained at home and made myself acquainted with the first rudiments of knowledge, without the aid of which, travel is but weariness and unrest.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE VOYAGE TO LONDON.

THE first vessel leaving Mauritius was a small ship taking a cargo of sugar to Sydney, New South Wales. To that port the captain offered to take me for the sum of seven pounds. It was not the most direct way home; nevertheless, I resolved to go with him; and after bidding my friend, the merchant, good-bye, I embarked the next day.

I was now anxious to return home, with the intention of remaining there for the future. Experience had taught me that I was yet too young and too ignorant of the ways of the world to be trusted with safety to myself in foreign lands. Each attempt I had made at seeing the world had resulted in disap-

pointment and personal suffering. I was robbed of my money, and had to return either penniless and in rags, or to accept favours from strangers. My thirst for adventure had become satisfied, or had died a natural death.

There was another reason why I was not disinclined to return to London and pursue some respectable calling. My boyish fancy had taken fast hold of me. It was there where I was only likely to meet Mary Moody, and the more I thought of her the more foolish did the aimless, wandering life I had been leading appear to me. I had spent many hundred pounds in trying to see the world, and had found, with the preacher, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit.

I had many long days and nights for reflection before reaching Sydney. I determined to make up for lost time, and hoped, with care and diligence, to be able to pass muster as an intelligent young man—a character I felt I had completely lost sight of in every other place I had been in.

We were now approaching the mainland of Australia, and soon entered Bass's Straits, passing Port Philip, the landing-place for Melbourne, that beautiful city itself lying at the northernmost point of Hobson's Bay, some few miles inland from the shore.

One morning, in the seventh week of our voyage from Mauritius, I turned out and found the vessel at Wilson's Promontory, the most easterly point of the northern coast of Bass's Straits, if we exclude the picturesque bay in the Pacific between it and Cape Howe. Close in the track of the ship were some huge, irregularly-shaped pillars standing out of the ocean, smoothed and polished by the action of the water, one of which had a large hole drilled through it by the

constant friction of the sea, and these the captain pointed out as geological evidence of the connection which must have existed in remote times between the mainland of Australia and Tasmania.

We were now fairly in the Pacific, and the gratified eye ranged over the wide expanse, with the glorious billows sparkling in the sun. After passing Cape Howe these billows break in grandeur against the rocky perpendicular sea-wall formed by the cliffs, above which a continuous panorama of dark mountains stretches away into the distance.

It was pleasant, after a tedious voyage, to coast along the shores of the beautiful Illawarra, whence the object of greatest interest which meets the sight of the traveller is the distant lighthouse on the South Head, rising to a great altitude, a conspicuous landmark at the entrance of Port Jackson. Projecting into the ocean beyond the line of its companion headland is the North Head, and between the two is a narrow channel formed by Pinchgut Island, which leads into the beautiful harbour of Sydney.

It was Sunday morning when we cast anchor, and I am bound to say that the inhabitants, answering to the numerous church-bells, as each hastened to some place of worship, left an impression most favourable as a whole. There were an aristocratic look and manly bearing about the men, and much personal beauty and good taste in dress everywhere conspicuous in the women. Sydney has a thorough English appearance. It is a large and handsome city, seated on the rocky shores of the harbour, the rocks furnishing the stone of which it is built.

The streets are long and wide, lighted with gas, with good water-supply, and many drinking fountains.

The system of sewerage is excellent. There are shops, warehouses, and stores of every description ; capital hotels and boarding-houses, banks and public offices ; the university, a theatre, the museum ; baths, coaches, cabs, omnibuses and steamers, railroads, telegraph wires, and all the latest appliances of luxury and civilisation.

The suburb of Woolloomooloo is the most aristocratic part of the town, consisting of residences and pleasure-grounds which can scarcely be rivalled by any similar suburb of the great metropolis at home. The Domain, as the Park is called, and the Botanic Gardens adjoining, are all that natural beauty, added to wealth and science, can make them.

The scenery along the banks of the Paramatta River, winding amid sunny villas and shady orange-groves, is of the most seductive kind, and numerous other pleasant spots and villages, all within easy distance, offer every facility for healthful exercise ; but, perhaps, the most charming of all these short excursions is the drive along the shores of the harbour to the South Head, one continuous panorama of the beautiful, till at the South Head itself the eye takes in the wild grandeur of the great Pacific in all the majesty of Nature.

I had, however, but little opportunity of seeing much of the town in a stay of only four days, for a large ship laden with wool was to sail for London on Wednesday, and the passengers were already embarking. Another might not sail for a month ; so I lost no time in securing my passage, and went on board on Tuesday evening.

I know I may be thought to have acted foolishly in having come so long a distance to see so little, but although I had again a few pounds at my disposal, I deemed it prudent to spend as little as possible till I

should again reach home, and so preferred shipping myself on board a regular trader at half the cost of the voyage by steamer.

The voyage to London would have been a very dull one had there not been one family on board that afforded some amusement for the other passengers.

The head of this family, Mr. Johnson, was returning to England to live on a fortune he was taking with him—a fortune obtained in the colonies. Before we had been a week at sea, I saw enough of this family to know that the fortune itself had not been made by their own exertions and industry, and from one of our fellow-passengers I learnt that such was the case. Two years before Mr. Johnson had been a small retail shopkeeper in London, barely supporting his family on the profits of his business. A brother who had been sent to the colonies many years before, at the expense of his country, had made a large sum of money there, and sent for his poor relatives to emigrate and share in his prosperity. As the brother could not return to his native land, Mr. Johnson accepted the invitation. The brother died within four months after his relatives reached the colony, and Mr. Johnson was now on his way to England with all his money. The family consisted of the father and mother, two daughters, and a boy about twelve years of age. They were the only saloon passengers, and etiquette, it would seem, would not allow them to associate with the second-class passengers, of whom I was one.

I overheard Mr. Johnson conversing with the captain, as they were standing near the railing dividing the quarter-deck from the waist. The man was only a vulgar cockney, and nothing else; and dared not

speak to me, or to any of the second-class passengers, for fear his wife or daughters might see him. The vanity of the little boy could not be confined to the quarter-deck alone; and, with child-like sociability, he would condescend to speak to us, but his remarks seemed inspired by the vulgarity of the rest of the family.

Amongst those returning to England in the second cabin was a young civil engineer, who had emigrated to the colonies a little too soon, there being at that time but small demand for his skill. Another had shipped as surgeon of one of the celebrated "Black Ball" clippers, but, having quarrelled with the captain of that vessel, he was returning in our ship at his own expense. A third passenger was a lady-like young person, who had gone out as governess, and was now returning, with three years' salary, to a widowed mother.

All the passengers in the second cabin, with one or two exceptions, were apparently intelligent, respectable people, and I was quite pleased that poverty had compelled me to take a passage with them instead of in the saloon, as I should have done had I had plenty of money.

The young boy, Johnson, one day said to me, "Don't you wish you had plenty of money, that you could be in the saloon like us?"

"No, certainly not," I replied; "for I prefer the society of ladies and gentlemen."

I knew that the boy was too young to be much wounded by this remark, but it was made with the hope that it would be repeated to the other members of his family. In this I was not mistaken, for the youngster immediately left me and joined his two

sisters on the quarter-deck, where I saw him pointing his finger at me, while he was undoubtedly telling them what I had said.

In the early part of the voyage I had noticed a youth about eighteen years old, who was acting as a cuddy servant. He was a thin, delicate-looking lad, always rushing about obeying some harshly-given command by the steward or the first or second mate. When coming round Cape Horn, Harry—as the lad was called—was taken ill, and was confined to his bunk; and the day we entered the Channel I was told that he had just died.

Some of the passengers were landed at Plymouth, where the vessel touched. Others sent letters to let their friends know of their arrival, and as we drew near the East India Docks, at Blackwall, there was a crowd on the wharf to welcome us.

The ship was moored, and for a moment there was much confusion, caused by some hurrying ashore and others coming aboard. Among the latter was a poor, cleanly-dressed woman, about forty years of age, who asked for her son. The inquiry was made of the second mate. The man was too busy in superintending the sailors, who were furling the sails, to take the least heed of what she said. One of the ship's boys then told the woman to follow him, and led the way to the hospital, where Harry was lying dead.

I have witnessed many exhibitions of grief, but never anything equal to the heart-breaking woe expressed by that poor woman, who had come aboard to meet her only child on his return from his first voyage, and had found him sleeping in death.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

A TALK WITH UNCLE JOHN.

I FOUND Uncle John sitting just as I had left him nearly a year and a half before. He did not look one hour older than then, nor did he appear to meet me with the least pleasure after my long absence. He said nothing except a few words about business—to inform me that the orders on him for money I had given to the captain of the transport and the Mauritius merchant, had both been presented and paid. After telling me this, he took a cheque-book and began filling up a blank cheque.

“How much?” he asked, as he commenced writing.

“Fifty,” I answered.

A cheque for fifty pounds was given me, and I started for the door.

“Stop a minute,” said Uncle John; “I wish to know where you are living.”

I told him that I was stopping for a few days at the Salisbury Hotel, but that I was going to take apartments in a day or two in the suburbs, and would let him know.

He made no reply, and I left. A few days after, being established in my lodgings in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, I was surprised at receiving a letter from Uncle John.

"I wish you would call on me within a day or two," he wrote, "for I must see you on business. If you were a stranger, etiquette would demand my taking the trouble to find you, but hoping you will not think your time more valuable than mine, and that you will be willing to do me a favour, I shall expect to see you within two days at least."

The next morning I called on him at his office. His manner now was very different from what I had ever witnessed before. He was not only civil, but polite. The reason was, that I had not called on my own business, but at his request.

"This is very kind of you, Fred," said he, "and I shall not forget it; but I hope you have not put yourself to much inconvenience in complying with my request so soon. I should have called on you two days ago, but the fact is I have a little extra press of business to attend to, and by coming here you have saved me much valuable time. What I wish to know is this. I learn from Lieutenant Warner, whom you either deserted most shamefully, or got separated from by accident—mind! keep your own counsel as to which—that at the time you left his vessel you were accompanied by the surgeon, a young man named Banks. What has become of this Banks? Where did you leave him?"

This was not a pleasant question for me to answer, and for a moment I was silent.

"Banks has relatives who have applied to me to learn something of him," continued Uncle John, as though apologising for asking the question, "and you have turned up just in time. I hope that you can give them good news."

"Indeed, I cannot," I replied; "for I left Banks in Africa."

"That is bad," answered Uncle John, "because it makes any present knowledge of him uncertain. We want something positive."

"That is impossible," I replied; "but of one thing you may be certain, and that is, that Banks's friends will never see him again."

"Now, that is something better," exclaimed the old lawyer, in a more pleasant tone. "Is he dead?"

"Yes."

"How do you know that he is dead?"

"Because I saw him devoured by a lion."

"You could not have a stronger—I will not say a better—reason for thinking him dead. This information will be of great service to me."

When I remembered the shocking manner in which poor Banks had died, I was a little pained at the manner in which the news of his death was received by my uncle, and I told him so.

"I can't help it, my boy!" he exclaimed; "you bring me good news for my client, and I'm not such a hypocrite as to cry over it. The loss of a wild young man is often a great benefit to society in general, and to his friends in particular. Now, tell me all about his death. I shall want you to make an affidavit containing a full statement of all you know about him."

I then related all the particulars of that dreadful day.

"That was a shocking death, certainly," said Uncle John, when I had finished ; "but I dare say you regret the young man's fate more than any one else, although I don't see that you have anything to reproach yourself with, as you only appear to have acted in self-defence. Now, I'll tell you why I am interested about his death. He was an only son, and one to whom his father could not prudently leave any money in his sole control. The father died about six months ago, leaving about twelve thousand pounds to trustees for his son's benefit. By the provisions of the will, should the son die without lawful issue, the money is then to be for the use and benefit of a niece—a daughter of Mr. Banks's only sister—the sister herself to have an interest in the money and property during her life. That sister is my client, and when I prove the death of young Banks she will obtain the property. The testimony you can give is just what I require, and but for your assistance my client might be kept out of the money for years, if not for ever. In fact, the death of young Banks could not be proved without you."

Uncle John then drew up an affidavit, and sent a clerk with me to a commissioner on the same floor as his offices, to have me sworn to it.

A month passed, in which my brains were at work in trying to decide on what I should do in the future. I had no longer the least desire to ramble, but was willing to engage in any honest employment, and devote my whole attention to it ; yet with the strongest determination of doing something immediately, I could find nothing to do.

One day I went to consult Uncle John, and asked

him what I should do for a living in the future. He looked at me with an expression of the most profound surprise.

"Is it only now that you have begun to think of that?" he exclaimed. "What have you been about for the last three or four years? I thought that you were qualifying yourself for the work of fighting your way in the world in some respectable manner. I'm sure you have spent money enough to have learnt or done something. You have been several voyages. Can't you navigate a ship, and find employment as an officer in the merchant service?"

I told him that I could not.

"Well, what have you learnt? What can you do?" he asked.

"Nothing," I replied; "and I have come to you for advice. What do you think about my getting articled to you or some other solicitor, so that in a few years I may either start on my own account, or join some established firm as partner; and why not yours, for instance, if you think well of me?"

"That won't do at all, Fred. You never would earn salt to your porridge in our profession, and it would be very foolish, as well as wicked, for you to attempt it. You could never do yourself the slightest good without injuring others."

"Do you mean that I am too great a fool ever to make a successful lawyer?"

"Well, I did not say so; but put it in other words, and that is just what I do mean."

"But what do you advise me to do?"

"I am not going to give you any advice at all. Good advice is too often thrown away on some folks. Besides, sensible people do not need it. A youth who

has the determination and the ability to make his way in the world will do so in spite of all opposition; but one who has not cannot be saved by good advice, which he will be sure to quote as the cause of all his misfortunes thereafter should he not succeed."

This visit to Uncle John did me good, for I left him with a still stronger determination to do something without further delay. I would let him know that I was not the fool he supposed me to be. This resolution was a good one; but the only action I took upon it was to join some dissipated young men, with whom I had formed a slight acquaintance, and to spend the night in getting more under the influence of drink than I had ever been before. Experience has since taught me the lesson that *now, if ever*, is always the time to commence a reform. There are thousands of people who form good resolutions, and who intend to commence carrying them out in a few hours. The time with them for commencing a reform is always a few hours in the future; and that future is always just as distant as ever.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SOMETHING TO DO.

AMONGST the acquaintance I had formed since my return to London was a young person who wrote for some of the cheap weekly periodicals. He was earning, he told me, more than twenty pounds a month, and yet he did not seem to work very hard, for he was always to be seen where what he called "life" was going on. He said he was only just feeling his way, and should do much better when his name became known to the world.

He lent me two or three of his romances that had been published in one of the penny serials, the chief circulation of which lies amongst the factory hands in the large manufacturing towns of Britain, but which are also extensively read by the daughters of tradesmen, and, more extensively still, by domestic servants, steamboat and railway travellers. They were weak love stories, written in a kind of intuitive English, just suited to the class of readers I have been naming, upon whom elegance of style and careful composition would be thrown away. Incident must follow incident, however unnatural the transition, the story be placed in high life, and the pages supposed to be a reflex of that exclusive society of which the writer probably knows about as much as his readers.

The periodical had large woodcut illustrations, one of which represented a scene between two persons—a youth and a young maiden. They looked as though they had been quarrelling, but these few words explaining the illustration removed that impression:—

“ ‘Alice, dear!’ said George, putting down the book he had been perusing.

“ ‘What is it, love?’ asked the fair girl, with her usual sweet smile.”

Now, if my new friend could earn a good living by scribbling pages of words containing not one original idea and not one particle of information, might I not do as well, or even better, with what I felt was a superior intelligence, added to my experience of the world? I resolved to make the experiment.

The idea seemed to come upon me by inspiration. I was delighted with it. I had found out what to do at last, and had not been waiting for nothing.

There was no longer an excuse for me being idle, or even the wish to be so. This time it was certainly "*now or never*" with me. I went out and bought a ream of paper, and sat down to work at once.

Determined to give my genius a fair chance, I finished four chapters before turning back to read a word of the manuscript. I then read what I had written, and felt satisfied with my work. Indeed, as with all novices I presume, I thought it very good. I had introduced characters with whom I felt sure every reader would be delighted. I had foreshadowed an intricate and exciting plot, mixing up incidents and information gathered in the wild rambling life I had been leading for the last few years, such as no author could pick up who never had left his native land. I was certain that no one could read my tale without learning something—far better than passing years in reading the tame, trite platitudes which are the staple of the stories of most of the penny serials, the perusal of which can make no one wiser or better. "Certainly," thought I, "the road to fame and fortune is now found, and I will follow it."

Like most sanguine, untried writers, I had not the slightest doubt but that a large sum would be readily obtained for my story, and so was no way careful in the expenditure of my money while writing it. My Mentor told me that literary men require excitement and lively recreation from mental toil—that constant application to literary labour prematurely exhausts the powers of the brain. He kindly introduced me to some of his friends with whom this recreation could be shared; so that, under his leadership, I became acquainted with some third-rate theatrical people of both sexes, pugilists, betting men, and others, who

led "fast" lives, and to whom I gave many a carouse at a public-house in one of the streets off Whitefriars. I was also installed a member of the literary club to which he belonged. This, he said, was necessary to our profession, as we could not be expected to write up to the time, or for the age, without knowing something of the life passing around us.

My demands on Uncle John for money were now more frequent, but were always cheerfully complied with, and although conscious that I was spending money fast, I could not help thinking that I was at least in a fair way of earning it much faster. Every day I devoted three or four hours to my work, and was quite satisfied with the result.

Amongst the literary men to whom I was introduced, was one who had acquired some reputation as "Own Correspondent" to one of the penny morning papers. This person condescended to patronise me, for the reason, I believe, that he was a great gourmet, spendthrift, and very often in want of money. As I was generally well supplied with that necessary article, we often dined together at "Simpson's" or "The London," at my expense; and sometimes, too, he would oblige me by accepting a small loan. However, he had seen much of the world, was a man of information, and well educated, and always expressed himself grateful for what he called favours. I believe that he really had a feeling of good-fellowship towards me, for he introduced me into a better class of society, and from a lady, the head of a family with which he had become acquainted, he obtained permission to bring me with him on the occasion of a *soirée musicale*, to be held at her house, partly supported by professional performers, and partly by amateurs.

On our arrival he presented me to our hostess, who received me in a very courteous manner. While so engaged, two ladies entered the room, to whom I was soon after introduced by our hostess as a person who had visited America. They were Mrs. Moody and her daughter Mary, whom I had been so long anxious to meet with! For the moment I was speechless with joy and wonder, particularly as I perceived that Mary recognised me evidently with pleasure. Mrs. Moody, apparently, had quite forgotten me, or perhaps my altered dress and appearance prevented her remembering me.

Since my return to London, amid all the dissipation into which I had been led, I had never ceased to think of Mary Moody. My eyes had been constantly in search of her while in the parks, at the opera and the theatres, at the Crystal Palace, and other places of public resort. Now she was standing before me, more lovely and beautiful than ever.

She had seen me as a common sailor on board ship, subjected to insults, and performing menial labour such as seamen, not undergoing punishment, are not expected to perform. Under these circumstances many young men would have felt somewhat abashed at meeting those who had witnessed their humiliation. I might have been the same, had my memories of Mary Moody been a little different; but in the joy of finding her now, everything else was forgotten. Here we met on equal terms. Perhaps, knowing but little of the usages of polished society, into which I was now introduced almost for the first time, perhaps, too, owing to the dash and daring a seafaring life gives a man in his converse with the fair sex, I did not stand upon etiquette, but made

the most of the opportunity, and monopolised the principal share of Mary's attention during the evening. I spoke of the voyage from Honduras; but, unlike what most others would have done, I made no apology or excuse for being in the situation in which she had first seen me; then told her of other voyages made since, and expressed a fixed determination of never going on another.

That evening I acted upon the motto of "*now or never.*" The present opportunity to me was everything. Of etiquette I knew nothing and cared less, so perhaps I may have overstepped the line marked down by good breeding occasionally, but I simply told the truth. I told Mary Moody that I had thought of her hourly ever since seeing her as the trains were stationary side by side for a few seconds at the Woking Station. We had now met again, and as I had the address, I should avail myself of it to call and inquire after her on the morrow.

I am sure that she was not displeased at my sailor-like fashion of expressing admiration, because, a few minutes later, when Mrs. Moody invited my friend to an evening party in the course of the next week, and turning to me, asked me to accompany him, there was not the slightest expression of dissent or annoyance visible in the features of the fair girl.

Simple as has been the story of my life, there was in it a mystery to Mary Moody. She had the natural curiosity of her sex, and when that is awakened in his behalf, a man's task in gaining a woman's affections is no longer difficult, provided he does nothing to wound the womanly pride and self-respect of the object of his love.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE OFFER OF A FORTUNE.

On the morning following the *soirée musicale*, I called again on Uncle John, who had now a set of chambers in the same house in which his offices were located.

"I'm glad to see you, Fred," he said; "for I should have written to you this evening had you not called. I'm getting the Banks matter all arranged to my mind. You see there is no opposition; there are no other claimants—no relatives to fight—and my client will soon have the money. Perhaps I may want another affidavit to be sworn jointly by you and Lieutenant Warner, as to the exact date of your leaving the vessel with Banks. Warner is in town, and his belief is that you both accidentally lost yourselves in

the wilderness; so you had better let that be looked upon as the fact."

Uncle John seemed in excellent spirits, invited me to dine with him, and I promised to be at his office punctually at five o'clock. "Sharp five," he said; "military time."

As this was the first occasion on which the old gentleman had ever asked me to put my feet under the table with him, I was punctual to my appointment, and found my uncle waiting with his hat in his hand ready to start. We walked down Chancery Lane into Fleet Street, and turning up a court on the north side of the street, entered a somewhat dark and dismal-looking tavern, over the door of which was a large and conspicuous lamp. We went into a room opposite to us. It could not be called comfortably furnished; indeed it was quite the reverse. It was fitted up with close boxes, looking something like cattle-pens, each with a narrow table fixed in the centre, with benches on either side. The floor was sanded, and a large old-fashioned clock ticked out the seconds as they flew by, while a picture something in the style of Hogarth, representing a party in the costume of the early part of the reign of King George III., in which the likenesses of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Boswell, and Garrick were conspicuous, was placed over the chimney-piece—itsself evidently a brand saved out of the great fire of London. The place had been one of the haunts of the great moral philosopher. Most of the seats were occupied, and there was a constant rattling of knives and forks. Men evidently came here to eat, not to talk. We took possession of two seats at a little table by the chimney-corner, a place which seemed to be reserved at that hour for Uncle

John. An elderly waiter soon made his appearance, and my uncle simply said, "Steaks for two; potatoes and stout to match." This done, turning to me he said, with a bright smile—

"Now, Master Fred, you shall have a steak such as you have never tasted before. You may go all over the City—and there are plenty of houses where the gridiron is in the room as here—but there is not such a cook for chops and steaks in all the world as 'Charles,' whom you see close to your right picking out two ripe steaks for our dinner."

After waiting some fifteen minutes the old waiter again made his appearance, carrying in his hand two plates with flat tin covers upon them, and two pieces of bread in another plate. The covered plates contained the potatoes, served in their jackets, and following my uncle's example, I immediately commenced peeling those in the plate before me. We had scarcely completed this operation when two taps struck by Charles on the gridiron gave notice to the old waiter that our steaks were now done to a turn; and almost at the same moment, the latter, as if by magic, placed before each of us a hot pewter platter with a tin cover, containing the identical steaks. I now saw why my uncle had chosen his place so close to the fire, for it was but a few seconds since the steaks were hissing and frizzling on the gridiron. Two pint tankards were then brought from an inner bar in the room by a lad, upon which my uncle merely uttering the word "*Benedicas*," and adding, "Fred, you see your dinner before you," took off the cover from his steak, and commenced its discussion at once.

I followed his example. The steak was of a triangular shape, showing its true descent from the

best part of the rump. The moment I put the knife into it, the pewter platter, which was perfectly bright before, was inundated with rich and luscious gravy from the meat. I now knew why nobody was talking. I had never tasted such a delicious steak before.

Uncle John looked up from his plate to see how I was going on, and took the opportunity to raise the tankard to his lips, smacking them with a relish as he replaced it on the table. There was something so seducing in that sound, that involuntarily I followed suit. The stout needed no bush; it was perfection.

Uncle John seemed to linger with perfect satisfaction and enjoyment over every mouthful. When the platters were emptied the old waiter placed half a large ripe Cheshire cheese, upon which already many onslaughts had been made, on the table before us, with plates and knives, two small pats of butter, some watercresses, and a plate of crisp "pinched bread." Such was our dinner, and the time it took us, by the old clock in the corner, was exactly one hour and twenty minutes. After picking his teeth with a toothpick, a wine-glassful of which graced the centre of each table in the room, for the first time my uncle addressed the old waiter by name:—

"Sam, a bottle of the old sort, up-stairs. I have a little business to transact, so let us have the room to ourselves."

We adjourned accordingly, ascending a narrow flight of stairs, and were soon seated in a small room overlooking the court, in which were two easy-chairs, and upon a round table a couple of wine-glasses, a decanter of port, and a plate of biscuits. We were no sooner seated than Uncle John said—

"Fred, my boy, now we will have a little talk about

business. I think it is time that one of us should take a wife and have a home. I know of a good opportunity for either or both of us,—the mother and daughter of whom I've told you, who now come into the money that your friend Banks would have had had he not been swallowed up by the lion. There is plenty of money besides, the mother having a life interest in it, and then it is very properly tied up for the daughter and any family she may have. Now you must marry the daughter, or I must take the widow. Which shall it be? You shall decide. The girl is a ward of mine, and her mother will be guided by me, if you can win the daughter's affection."

In answer to this, I told Uncle John that I was much too young to marry, that it would be folly to think of my taking a wife until more settled in life. I then tried to convince him that it was his duty to marry the widow, and bring up a family, instead of spending all his days in a dull office.

"Don't give me any advice, Fred," he replied, "until you have seen the girl. She is beautiful and highly accomplished, clever and sensible, and I'm sure you will like her. If you like you shall go with me to call upon the mother to-morrow, as I have some papers requiring her signature."

To have humoured my uncle in his whim would have been treason to Mary Moody; so I flatly refused to entertain his proposal. I fancied that he was somewhat annoyed at this, and soon after I took my leave, simply thanking him for his hospitality.

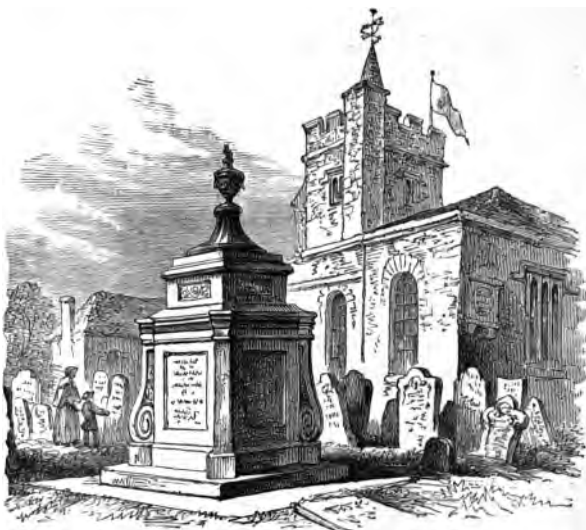
The next morning I went from my lodgings by the boat from the Cadogan Pier, to call upon Mrs. Moody and Mary. They were living in a pretty house a little distance only from Hammersmith Suspension

Bridge, and received me in a very friendly manner—Mary evidently welcoming me with pleasure.

We walked out into the garden, where Mrs. Moody was cultivating in the conservatory some plants she had brought from Honduras, and Mary had just established a water-vivary with mimic rock-work, in which were some gold carp, water-snails, and a few plants of *Valisneria spiralis*. Something had gone wrong with the Honduras plants, and while Mrs. Moody was settling matters with the gardener, I asked Mary to show me her aquarium. This gave me an opportunity, of which I determined to avail myself, of speaking to Mary. I thought more of Mary Moody than all else on earth. Why should I wait for weeks or months before telling her so? We were seated under the shade of the trees, and I did tell her; but, pretending not to understand me, and without making any reply, she rose up from the seat and joined her mother just as that lady emerged from the greenhouse; but there was an expression in Mary's countenance that told me clearly that she was not offended.

I returned home, well pleased with the result of my visit; for Mrs. Moody had said she should always be glad to see me, when I could find leisure to call. I set to work on my story now with more enthusiasm than before, for I determined to prove myself worthy of Mary's love and esteem.

Thus far in life I had not shown much wisdom. I had squandered my money foolishly, suffering myself to be robbed and plundered, where a little forethought might have saved it. I now felt that I was capable of doing something better, and I was determined to win a name that Mary Moody would not object to exchange for her own.



CHAPTER XL.

"MISFORTUNES NEVER COME SINGLE."

For the next two months I was almost a daily visitor at Mrs. Moody's pretty villa residence on the banks of the Thames, not far from Chiswick Church, generally going up the river by the Kew steamer, and landing at Hammersmith Bridge. There was a new inmate, a young lady, who seemed to be a companion to Mary, so that we were seldom left alone. I fancied, however, that my attentions were not indifferent to Mary. It was evident to me that she loved me, and would often consult me about the books she was reading, so that I found it necessary to devote some hours daily to a careful study of the best current literature, of which up to that moment I had been profoundly ignorant.

Indeed, when I look back to that period, I feel certain that to my enduring attachment to Mary all my after success in life is mainly attributable. I had run away from school, an overgrown, self-conceited school-boy, just at that period when I might have profited by careful discipline and instruction. I had had almost unlimited means placed at my disposal had I been inclined to have acted with common prudence after that event; but I had foolishly believed that the best instruction I could have by way of improvement was to go out into the world; for, I said to myself—

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

What the words of the poet meant I was too ignorant to understand. Had such not been the case I should certainly not have shipped myself as I did, to the Slave States of America, to pursue that study amongst the debased society of slave-owners, slave-drivers, and slaves in the flesh, instead of contenting myself with the only true knowledge of mankind available for such a study to be derived from books.

Amongst books which now fell in my way in the desultory reading I was pursuing was an annotated edition of the works of Shakspeare, extensively illustrated with woodcuts of scenery, costume, antiquities, and natural history, besides such illustrations as represented the characters and action of the plays. There were also introductions and appendices to every drama, showing its sources from earlier literature, and giving the manners and customs, not only of the supposed period of the play, but also those of the writer of the source from which it was borrowed, and of Shakspeare himself.

To one like me, determined to make up for the loss of time foolishly idled away, this book was a perfect treasure-house. There is not a human thought but finds its echo in the pages of Shakspeare, and the various elucidations of pen and pencil displayed those thoughts with such skill and knowledge that truly I here found that study of mankind which the poet recommends.

After this I looked upon my manuscript with much distrust. I saw how crude and ill-digested were my thoughts, and I at once began to re-write the whole; for I felt that till my book was completed and in the hands of a publisher, I had no prospect of marriage; for unless I could obtain regular literary employment, I had no means of keeping a house over my head. Mrs. Moody had, by some means unknown to me, become acquainted with the fact that my parents were dead, and that my father had left me sufficient capital for a start in life. This I had gleaned from time to time in the course of conversation with that lady. It struck me, too, that though she did not quite fancy me for a son-in-law, she was too much wrapped up in the happiness of her daughter to allow any opposition on her part to militate against it. At all events, it was clear to me that, to whatever my good fortune may have been owing, Mrs. Moody did not seem in any way displeased at my frequent visits.

My book was at last re-written, and I took it to the office of one of the weekly serials. I entered, and having stated my business, was ushered into an inner room. The person I met there was not the editor, as I had anticipated. Indeed, it was evident that he was neither a man of education nor a gentle-

man. However, he meant, I presume, to be very polite; but his manners showed that the rôle was not natural to him. He did not even unfasten the string of the parcel which contained the manuscript, though he promised that it should at the earliest opportunity be placed in the hands of one of their readers for an opinion, expressing the hope that we might be able to do business with each other to our mutual advantage.

Ten days passed, and I received a note from the editor stating that he understood that, as a first attempt, there was considerable promise of future success, though in its present state the story was scarcely suited for the pages of a journal addressing itself to the class of readers who took in his periodical.

I had anticipated nothing but success; the disappointment was therefore the greater, but I determined to submit my manuscript to another editor, who, I doubted not, would be less prejudiced, and see at once the merits of the work, to which the other could only have been wilfully blind. Alas for my hopes! within forty-eight hours the parcel came back to me by post, a single line on the outside informing me that it was "returned with thanks." A similar fate was in store for it on three or four other occasions, and I began to despair of ever finding a publisher for it.

However, I resolved to make one more attempt by sending it to one of the most popular cheap serials. After leaving the story with the publisher for some weeks, I called for an answer. He told me that he had read the work himself, and had been much interested in it, but he regretted to say that it was not suited for his publication. Observing that he appeared

to be in a good humour, and seemed kindly disposed towards me, I ventured to ask for a little information and advice. I told him that he had read my first attempt at authorship, and asked him kindly to point out what he considered the faults of my work.

"I have no fault to find with it," he replied. "I have already told you it possesses considerable interest, but it is not suited to our class of readers, and would probably cause our circulation to drop. What is instructive as well as amusing to some, is not so to others. You see," he continued, "that I can only buy what is suitable for our market. 'Our public' would not understand your story, and, consequently, would not be interested in it. They don't wish to make a study of the class of society in which they move. Had Mr. Dickens offered his 'Oliver Twist' to one of the penny serials, it would probably have been rejected but for the author's reputation. The class of readers for which the cheap journals cater like to be told of life in the sphere above them. They will just tolerate a baronet's family, but infinitely prefer that of a lord or a duke. Like the poor creatures one sees attracted by the light and tinsel of a gin-palace, our class of readers find a kind of intoxication in picturing to themselves the homes and habits of the aristocracy."

Thanking him for his courtesy, I retired. Literature was evidently not my *forte*. Yet it was necessary for me to do something that would bring in money, if I wished to take a wife, pay my way, and become a respectable member of society. At every step I took I was doomed to disappointment. Again I was penniless; so I went to see Uncle John to get some money,

with a little advice as to how it could be used to the best advantage in starting me in some way of earning my own living.

"How much money do you want?" he inquired, when I had made known my business.

"Only a few pounds to-day," I replied: "but I should like to have a little talk with you as to how I may best employ a few hundred pounds in business. It is about time I tried to make money as well as spend it."

Uncle John's features wore a peculiar expression as he unlocked a drawer in his desk and took out a small bundle of papers.

"I was reckoning up our account a few days ago," said he, "just to see how money matters stood between us. Here you will find two statements: one of the amount entrusted to my care under your father's will for your benefit, with the accumulation of interest on it; and the other a statement of the various sums I have advanced to you from time to time, with twenty per cent. interest on each sum, and the same percentage on the unpaid interest from the time the former was advanced to the end of last month. You will see by them that you owe me just three pounds four shillings and a penny balance. Do not inconvenience yourself, but let me have it when you are in funds."

For a moment I was speechless with astonishment. The intimation that I had already spent all my inheritance and was indebted to my uncle nearly knocked me down. Uncle John did not seem to notice how painful this sudden announcement of beggary was to me, but, pleading business, put on his hat and left

the office, as if such were a daily occurrence. Quite bewildered, and scarcely knowing what I was doing, I rushed out of the house, never stopping till I reached my lodgings at Chelsea.

Upon my arrival I found a note from Mrs. Moody, telling me that they were on the point of leaving home for a few months, and should probably remain at Eastbourne till the latter end of November. This letter was a relief to me ; it gave me time to mature my plans before, perhaps, I took a final farewell of Mary Moody.

I spent several hours that night in going over the figures. I could find no mistake in the account. Uncle John had added, as he had told me, interest to principal year after year, and charged twenty per cent. on all, until the money left by my father had been quite absorbed. He had taken advantage of my youth and inexperience to rob me with my own consent, and in such a manner that I could not reasonably make any complaint against him ; for he had always told me that it was a mere debt of honour, as I was only an infant in the eye of the law. I could not blame him much, for I had never followed his advice, and the money he had thus secured to himself would probably have been squandered as foolishly as the rest, had I obtained it. I resolved, however, to see him once more, and that only for the purpose of paying him the balance I owed him according to his statement.

The next morning I went to Attenborough's, in the Strand,—from whom I had purchased them,—and pledged my watch and chain, receiving eleven pounds upon them. I then called on Uncle John, who seemed

much pleased at getting the three pounds four shillings and a penny so soon, and put the whole sum, the penny included, into a leather bag, and tied it up.

"What are you going to do now?" he asked, as I rose to leave.

"To look for some employment," I replied. "There is work enough to do, and I am now going to seek for my share of it."

"That's right, Fred," he replied. "I should like to see you doing well in some honest calling; and whenever that is the case come and see me again, and I'll introduce you to the wife I told you of. That, after all, is the readiest way for you to make a fortune."

There was a tone of banter with which these words were uttered. I did not wait to hear any more, but bidding him good morning, left him with the determination of never darkening his doors again.

My next move was to give up my nicely-furnished lodging, and to seek for a bed-room in one of the cheap neighbourhoods about Bethnal Green, so that my former associates, whom I resolved to see no more, might know nothing of my whereabouts.

The following morning I answered personally an advertisement in the *Times* for a clerk.

"What has been your former employment?" asked the advertiser, when I had made known my business. I told him that I was applying for my first situation.

"Then you will not do for me," said he; "I have no time to teach you your business." Upon which he

again commenced reading his paper, which he had laid down upon my entrance, and wished me good morning.

There was another advertisement in the same paper the next day, which seemed almost as if I were the party most likely to suit the advertiser's views. It required a young man who had had some experience to go out as ship's clerk in a vessel trading with the rising colony of Natal. I hastened off the moment I had read the advertisement. Here, I thought, is the very berth for which I am fitted, and, as Captain Warner is no longer in England, it remains for me to tell my own story as to leaving the vessel, without fear of contradiction.

I was full of hope, and almost ran instead of walking. I reached Bishopsgate Street before the hour appointed, and yet, round the office, there was already a crowd of applicants for the post, whose seafaring appearance told, at least, of many a year passed at sea.

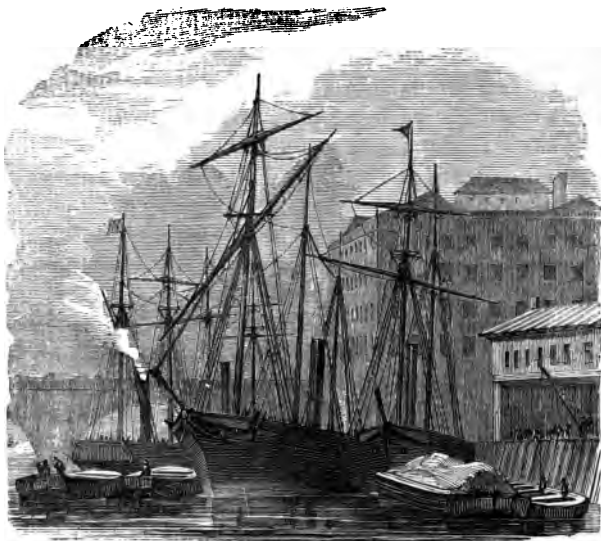
When my turn came, the very first question made my heart sink within me—"Did I know anything of navigation?" I who had been several long voyages knew nothing of navigation, and could therefore not take the wheel on an emergency. Of course, I did not obtain the berth.

During the following week I was an actor in many such scenes as those I have just described. Plenty of clerks are always in request; but no one would give me a chance, because I was twenty-three years of age and had never been in any similar situation before. I could give no reference as to ability and business habits, and again I became keenly

sensible of the folly of the way in which I had spent the last few years of my youth.

Despairing of finding any employment in counting-house or office, I sought for some way of earning a living by manual labour, but no one would employ me. My last shilling was spent, and some of my clothing had now to be pawned to raise money for my daily needs.

Another week passed, and although I was seeking early and late for employment, I could find none. I would have accepted any that was honest, but there seemed no opening for me, or any chance of making myself useful. My appearance was against me: my clothing too good, and my hands too white for a working man. I went back to my lodgings. Cheap as they were I had no longer the means of paying for them. I pledged all the clothing I had, except that in which I then stood upright, paid the rent to the landlady, and left the house, not knowing whither to go nor where to get a meal. In my extremity I would have prayed to God for aid and succour, but my own unworthiness seemed to hold me back. I had been relying only upon myself, and had never thought of God and religion till now.



CHAPTER XLI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

THAT night I walked about the streets of London without a home. The next day I was hungry, and did not know how or where to get a meal. I could not denude myself of the little raiment I had left; other means I had none. Uncle John might not have allowed me to starve, but my pride would not let me apply to him for aid. Pride also made me avoid my former associates, and homeless and friendless I wandered about the streets, striving in vain to find some means of honestly earning a mouthful of food to allay my hunger.

As I passed over Westminster Bridge towards morning I leaned over the parapet in an agony

which no words can describe. "Why should I struggle longer? I was not wanted on earth. Money could be obtained from me no longer; I was incapable of earning my own living; why, then, should I continue to exist?"

Such were the thoughts that occupied my mind as I gazed down upon the dark waters beneath. I thought of Mary Moody, and was conscious that henceforth my life could only be one of hopeless regret. She might have been mine but for my own thoughtless folly and extravagance. Should I live haunted by the thought that she whom I adored would be another's? that she, too, would learn to despise me as a trifier and a fool? It was a moment of painful and agonising suspense. There was no one near me on the bridge. My old axiom, "*now or never*," which sought for mastery over my mind, seemed suddenly blotted out and to fade away.

Was it a holier and a better thought that suddenly upheld me? Fear of death I had none, yet all idea of casting myself into the river below had vanished for ever. I upbraided myself for my wickedness and folly in having contemplated self-murder. "Is it possible?" thought I, "that there should be one young man on earth who, with health and strength, cannot earn a living, and that one myself, who but a few days ago had set up as a public instructor, by writing for the educated classes? Did not misfortune often strengthen and uphold the wavering? Why should I not be like them? Why, then, should I, like a coward, relinquish all hope without making an effort to overcome the evil?"

I crossed over the bridge, and, turning down the

York Road, started off east for the London Docks. There, at all events, I might have a day's wages for a day's toil. A long, weary walk was before me, and nearly exhausted with hunger and want of sleep, I did not reach the dock-gates until sunrise.

Six o'clock came, and the gates were opened. Labourers and others began to pass in, and I followed them. Some of the vessels were taking in freight, but for four hours I wandered about from vessel to vessel without the chance of getting employed.

Heart-sick and faint with hunger, I reached the outside of the dock-gates, every hope crushed, wishing for death, which seemed like the rest to mock my misery. Suddenly some one seized me by the hand. It was one of the crew of the vessel in which I had worked the passage home from Honduras, who was called Nantuck, from having once sailed in a Nantucket whaler.

"Ahoy, shipmate!" he exclaimed, "are you going to run me down without hailing? Heave-to, and take in some stores."

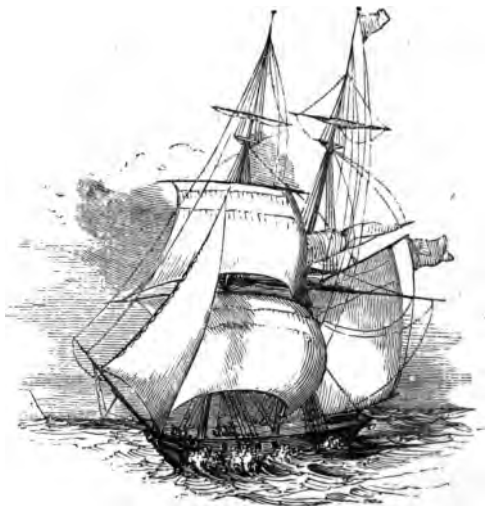
A slight thrill of joy took possession of me on being once more addressed in a familiar manner, and at meeting a man who recognised me as an acquaintance—one, too, who was willing, unsolicited, to incur the expense of giving me some refreshment, of which I stood in such need.

Nantuck had just received an advance after signing articles on a ship bound for Quebec, and seemed delighted at meeting an old shipmate to assist him in spending it. That day I was made quite happy, not by the realisation of great hopes that once were mine, not by again meeting with Mary Moody, and being

received by her in a manner the most fortunate lover could desire, but simply by having an opportunity of placing my name on the articles of a ship as an ordinary seaman.

With a little persuasion, Nantuck obtained the favour of having an old acquaintance allowed an opportunity of earning a living by enduring the hardships of a common seaman, and I was no longer homeless. No longer I walked the streets of London weary and hungry, and yet it was with a heavy heart that I assisted in getting the vessel under way, which was once more to take me far from Mary Moody.

I had once said that I would never more place myself in a position where I could be bullied and insulted by the officers of a vessel. That promise was broken now. It was not made when I was hungry, but before I knew that my money had been squandered, before I had tried authorship, before I had lost all hope of winning the only creature I ever loved, and before I had learnt that I was incapable in every way of earning a living in London, and had thus obtained a full conviction of my own incapacity to gain a livelihood in a more honourable calling.



CHAPTER XLII.

TOO WILLING.

It was in the latter part of October that the ship *Atlantic*, which I had joined, left the English Channel for Quebec.

The time of year was not the most favourable for a voyage across the Atlantic ; but, previous to embarking, sailors do not heed this, and should the subject be mentioned each will declare that he does not care about a trip where all is fair sailing—that there must be a little excitement, something to be done, a little rough weather to fight, or a man might as well stay on shore and follow the plough.

On shore all "salts" profess to love a sailor's life for its storms and perils, its excitements, difficulties, and hardships, as proving their claim to manhood. When suffering the realities of these hardships, however, their language is very apt to change. The ship is "a mere tub" and the weather "heavy;" the officers are "stupid idiots," and have run away from fair weather into foul, by not following the proper course; the food is "the worst of the kind;" and the cook, poor fellow, "a stupid brute who should be thrown overboard." Nothing is right.

The duty required of them, however, is performed in a manner that does credit to their skill and endurance; only sailors must be allowed the privilege of grumbling. Our crew was no exception to the rule, and Nantuck, in particular, was always the first to find fault with everybody and everything.

Captain Forsyth was a man who liked to carry on sail until the work of reefing was one of considerable difficulty and danger. A gale would be gradually increasing in power, and the certainty of having to reduce sail would be evident to all, yet he would not allow the work to be done until the spars and sails were loudly threatening to leave the vessel. Then he would get into a state of tremendous excitement, and hurry the men up with oaths and threats, as though the lives of all on board depended on the sails being properly taken in within a few seconds of time.

One morning a strong breeze set in from the southwest and gradually increased in power till it became a gale. The ship began plunging through the seas, and the water was thrown upon the deck quite as fast as the scuppers could carry it away, so that the pas-

sengers sought refuge below from the douches to which all on deck were constantly exposed.

The top-masts groaned from the weight forced upon them, and the crew, who had long been expecting the order to reef top-sails, seemed looking for some way of escaping from the shower that any moment might be expected from above.

"All hands reef top-sails!" at last shouted the captain.

I was at my station, and sprang into the main rigging, but no one followed.

"Do you hear?" yelled the captain. "All hands aloft, or I'll chase every cowardly brute of ye up with a handspike!"

I looked on deck and saw that the men were immovable. I was the only one who had made an attempt to obey.

"Will you obey orders?" exclaimed the captain, making a rush amongst the men.

The captain was but human, and could only attack one man at a time. He attempted to grapple with Nantuck, but the sailor hastily put the long-boat between himself and his angry skipper. The captain then made a general assault on the crew, kicking and striking at all in his way.

In this work he was joined by the first mate, who was in duty bound to assist his captain, right or wrong. Then was witnessed a scene that can only occur at sea—more than twenty men fleeing from the anger of two.

Those who may feel surprised at this, or are inclined to think that sailors do not possess the courage common to most men, know nothing of the circumstances in which seamen are often called upon to act.

Custom and law give officers the right to enforce their commands, and deny sailors the privilege of disobeying. If a seaman raises his hand, even in self-defence, against an officer, he will have to suffer a term of imprisonment.

Should either party be seriously injured or killed in such an encounter, the crime, as far as the officer is concerned, would only be looked upon as a common assault, or be pronounced justifiable homicide, while the sailor before the mast would be found guilty of mutiny or murder.

Some of the men ran into the rigging and others into the forecabin, where they were followed by the first mate.

These observations I made by looking below while slowly ascending to the cross-tree. I saw the necessity of the sails being taken in, and was expecting to be followed by my companions. I was willing to perform my duty, and made a hard struggle to do so as I resisted the strong pressure of the breeze, that seemed striving to bind me to the shrouds, and forced myself aloft.

I do not wish to imply that in the scene I have attempted to describe I had a stronger desire to perform my duty than others of the crew. I do not claim to have possessed more courage. The simple truth is, I went aloft through being ignorant of the danger I incurred in obeying orders. My shipmates had too much good sense to follow me, too good an opinion of the respect due to themselves from the commander of a vessel to expose their lives in so reckless a manner.

It was not until I had reached the cross-tree and was clinging to the yard undecided what to do, that a

strong suspicion came over my mind that I had been making a fool of myself.

I had not much time to indulge in this pleasant reflection, for my thoughts were interrupted by a noise like the report of a volley of musketry. The main-top-mast had yielded to the pressure upon it and broken.

I felt myself falling, and instinctively clung to the yard, still under the horrible sensation of falling down—down an immeasurable distance. I had been a long time forcing my way up the rigging, but the time passed in falling seemed much longer.

I thought of Uncle John and the heartless manner in which he had treated me; of Mary Moody, and the cruel fate that had driven me far from her society.

I thought of my own reckless and stupid conduct in the past—conduct that had cast me from a chance of happiness to a certainty of misery, danger, and perhaps death.

Then came a shock as though I had fallen on something, whence, after being turned over and tossed about, I was again hurled downward.

Then I seemed lying for many hours in a horrible state of uncertainty. I was not quite certain whether I was alive or dead—whether my head was on my shoulders or rolling over the world in a free and independent fashion. Something was spinning about with eccentric motions hundreds of miles a minute, but whether it was my head or the ship I neither knew nor seemed to care. I have described myself as being in a state of uncertainty, and such was the case, for I was not certain whether I was in happiness or misery. So confused were my thoughts that emotions

of both seemed struggling in my mind, and years seemed to pass before the slightest order or arrangement of my mental faculties could be established.

I first heard voices in what seemed some strange language, that took me several minutes to understand. Gradually the voices became more distinct, and I became aware that the language was my mother-tongue. Nantuck was speaking to me, and gently pouring a few drops of liquid into my mouth. I recognised the liquid as brandy, and immediately knew that I was alive, sensible, and suffering. The uncertainty had gone.

I was still lying in the boat; the surgeon would not allow Nantuck to remove me to my berth till he had examined me. But for the care and watchfulness of the latter I might have perished; for, as I afterwards learnt, the captain had been seriously injured, and the surgeon was in attendance upon him, besides which one of the crew had been killed, and another washed overboard.



CHAPTER XLIII.

MR. PHIPS.

THAT evening I was fully able to understand all that had happened. In falling with the yard I had been caught in the belly of the staysail, and had fallen from thence into the long-boat, amongst the sheep with which it was crowded.

The fall of the main-top-mast was instantly followed by that of the fore and mizen, and although the falling spars of course inclined to the leeward, upon every part of the deck fell a shower of blocks, booms, stays, and other parts of the rigging, and one man was killed.

In the confusion of clearing the deck and cutting away the wreck I was for a while unheeded ; and it was not until nearly an hour after my fall, when, under the command of Mr. Meadows, the first mate, the indescribable confusion that for some time held possession of the deck had been removed, that some one remembered having seen me fall into the boat.

On once more being able to stand on my feet, I found that the vessel was before the wind, and the wreck left far astern.

The man who had been killed was lying near me, with his brains oozing from a broken skull. He had been struck by a heavy block. Another of the crew was missing, having been knocked from the shrouds into the sea.

Soon after I began to take an interest in what was going on, I saw the ship's surgeon come from the cabin and ask the first mate for the assistance of one of the men.

"Captain Forsyth has a broken arm," said he, "and the steward is as helpless as a babe, and will give me no assistance."

"Got a broken arm, has he ?" exclaimed one of the crew, "well, that's a blessing, anyhow. There's never much harm done without a little good to some one."

The boatswain was sent into the cabin to aid the surgeon, and on his return amused some of the crew by relating all that was said.

He found the captain sitting up in his bunk cursing the crew for having caused all the misfortunes that had lately befallen him.

"Now, my man," said the surgeon to the boatswain, when he had placed the captain in a chair, "put your hands on the captain's shoulders, and don't you let him move an inch."

The man obeyed, and the surgeon commenced setting the broken arm.

"You inhuman wretch!" yelled the captain; "why don't you use an axe or a knife, if you want my arm off, and not drag it from me?"

After the fracture was reduced and the arm was being bandaged, the captain commenced talking about the accident that had just happened to him.

"I can't account for my arm being broken at all," said he, "for I was only struck by a piece of sail and a small line."

"I fancy I can understand the reason," said the boatswain. "It was broken by the same cause as killed poor Bill, and as caused my friend Jack to be knocked overboard and lost. It was because the top-sails were not reefed in time to save the masts."

After this explanation the boatswain was obliged to leave the cabin immediately, and for some time the voice of the captain could be heard giving loud expressions of impotent rage. There was no sympathy felt for the captain, nor did he deserve any.

In the ship were about one hundred and forty passengers, most of them English and Scotch. They all soon learnt the cause of the disaster that had befallen the vessel, and were justly indignant at the captain as the author of it.

The gale was followed by a fine fair breeze, but owing to the crippled condition of the ship but little advantage could be taken of it. In trying to gain a mile or two by neglecting to take in sail at the proper time, at least ten days had been added to the length of the passage.

The passengers were in very ill humour at the voyage having been unnecessarily prolonged, and did not forget to let the captain know every time he came on deck that through his fault they had been robbed of much valuable time.

In vain he tried to assume the authority and dignity that was once conceded to him, but it was not yielded either by passengers or crew. His ambition to be distinguished or known as a commander who would "carry on" till the last minute, had been carried on a little too far, and all confidence in his judgment and prudence was gone.

He had but one friend aboard the vessel, the steward, who was by nature a flunky, and who believed that skippers may do right or wrong as they please, without fault to be found with them.

Mr. Phips, the steward, was naturally a bully as well as a flunky; a bully to those younger and weaker than himself, and a flunky to the officers of the ship.

Although I was no longer a boy, this man had a very contemptible opinion of me. He knew that I was not an able seaman, and that I had been foolish enough to risk my life in obeying the captain's orders when all my shipmates had refused. This was enough to seduce him into the belief that I had not sufficient manliness to resent any insult from himself.

One day when he was in the galley, I wished to let him know that the surgeon wanted him to return to the cuddy. In making this communication I addressed him as "Steward." He turned round, caught hold of the collar of my coat, and in an insolent tone commanded me to repeat my message, and address him as "Mr. Phips." The next instant I put the ship on his back by knocking him to the deck. Mr. Phips regained his feet, and made a hasty retreat to the cabin.

Whenever he caught sight of me after that, his features assumed the most unlovely expression I had ever seen in a human being. The language of that expression plainly told me that I had made an enemy for life of one who would not hesitate to do me any injury in his power.

His enmity, however, was regarded more with amusement than fear, for I believed him, as far as I was concerned, to be a very harmless and insignificant creature. In this opinion I was mistaken, and I have since come to the conclusion that an enemy, however apparently contemptible, should never be looked upon with any feeling of satisfaction. The proverb is a true one, which teaches that "He who cannot serve you as a friend may yet injure you as an enemy."



CHAPTER XLIV.

AT QUEBEC.

Most of the cities of the New World have many features resembling each other, but Quebec is an exception.

It is said that the Spaniard commences a settlement with a church. He would not have chosen the promontory on which Quebec stands for the site of a house of prayer. Our practical Saxon race is said to look after creature comforts as more to the purpose of

trade and commerce ; so Englishmen and Americans usually build a tavern first, and let houses and churches follow in its wake. Quebec would certainly have been the last place on the river they would have chosen for such a structure. A Frenchman commences a colony with a fort, and the world offers but a few more suitable spots for that purpose than Quebec.

The city is built on a high ridge of land about one mile and a half wide, and so easily defended that the French on seeing it could not allow it to remain unoccupied ; so Cape Diamond was mounted with cannon.

Quebec is four hundred miles from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, yet its harbour admits ships of the line.

The word *Kébék*, in the language of the Red Indians of this portion of North America (which was discovered by John and Sebastian Cabot in 1497, and became the French settlement of Canada through Jacques Cartier's voyage up the St. Lawrence some thirty years later) signifies *narrow*, and was the name they gave to the peninsula at the junction of the St. Lawrence and St. Charles rivers, and with sound judgment and good taste the first colonists retained it to designate their city.

Soon after our arrival at Quebec the crew of the *Atlantic* were summoned to give evidence before a court of inquiry on the conduct of Captain Forsyth during the voyage from London, the agents to whom the ship had been consigned by the owners being the plaintiffs. The result was that the captain was pronounced incompetent to have the command of a ship, and Mr. Meadows, the first mate, was placed by the agents in his place.

All haste was made in getting the ship again ready for sea, but before her repairs were completed, the

river was entirely frozen over, and there was no prospect in consequence of the vessel returning to England until the spring of next year.

To avoid the expense of keeping the crew in idleness, the men were granted permission to find employment ashore, and most of them went up the St. Charles River to work in the forest at felling timber, but at the particular request of Captain Meadows, I remained aboard the vessel as ship-keeper.

This employment I found during much of the time to be very dull and monotonous. During the day, while the ship carpenters and riggers were at work, I was allowed liberty to go ashore, but I had no other home for the night than my bunk on board the ship, and was not allowed a fire. During those long, cold, and dreary nights I had plenty of time for profitable meditation, and notwithstanding all my efforts and wishes to the contrary the opportunity was not neglected.

The fact that I had squandered a moderate fortune, and cast away by such extravagance all hopes of securing my anticipated happiness, only to find myself at so early an age a miserable, wretched being, was seldom for an hour absent from my thoughts. Did ever before a person with such bright anticipations descend so low? I had aspired to be an author, I had dreamed of being united some day to Mary Moody, and now life was but a prolonged agony, without a single ray of hope!

It was true I had gained a thorough knowledge of my folly in the past, but what did that avail me now, for my dear-bought experience had come too late? All seemed lost, with no prospect of anything that it was

possible to win. My favourite motto, "*now or never*," could never have been acted upon by me at the proper time nor in a suitable manner.

Mr. Watson, the second mate of the vessel, was supposed to remain aboard from eight o'clock in the evening until eight the next morning, but this duty was seldom attended to. He spent his nights ashore, amusing himself at some of the dancing-houses or taverns in the town until two o'clock in the morning, and often much later.

One night while he was away I was awake, and heard some one moving cautiously overhead. At first I supposed that Mr. Watson had returned, and was just dozing off to sleep, when I happened to remember that he was never particular on his return in the morning whether he disturbed others or not. In fact, he generally made noise enough to wake me from a sound sleep.

The next fact I observed was that whoever had come on deck had not proceeded to the second mate's cabin in the waist, but had gone astern. Rousing myself up, therefore, I hastened on deck, looked down the companion-way, and saw that there was a light in the captain's cabin.

Mr. Meadows, who was now the master, had taken up his quarters at one of the hotels in the town, and never visited the vessel except during the day. For him to have come off in the night would have been something so extraordinary that I determined to make sure whether he was the person moving about below or not.

Lying down, and putting my head below the deck in the companion-way, I saw that the intruder was

Mr. Phips, the former steward, who had left the vessel with the captain. I knew that all property belonging to either of them had been removed from the ship, and I could not comprehend why Mr. Phips therefore had come aboard at that hour of the night.

Watching his movements for a moment, I saw him open the door leading from the cuddy to the captain's private cabin, which now contained only the property of Mr. Meadows. This was strange, for all the keys were supposed to have been surrendered by Captain Forsyth and the steward before their departure.

I did not believe that either of them had therefore now any more right to be on board the vessel than a perfect stranger, yet I might be mistaken, and so did not care to act on my own responsibility.

The estaminet where Mr. Watson generally smoked his cigar and supped of an evening, was not more than two hundred yards from the wharf, and after silently shoving home the bolt of the companion-way door, so as to prevent the steward from coming on deck, I started for that place of entertainment. Fortunately I met the mate on his way to the ship.

"Phips, our late steward, is in the cuddy," said I. "Come quick, or he may get out and take something away that don't belong to him."

Mr. Watson started on the run for the vessel, and on the way met a watchman on the wharf, whom he told to follow. As we reached the deck, loud shouts were heard at the bolted door of the cuddy.

Some one was pushing, knocking, and struggling violently to break down the door. The fearful yells became more intensely agonizing in sound, and were mingled with frantic shrieks, and the cry of "Fire! fire!" Uttered with wild, uncontrollable despair and

alarm, even these fearful words could scarcely be distinguished from the other expressions of agony that broke upon the silence of the night from the companion-way.

“What a fright the old fellow is in!” exclaimed Mr. Watson, trying to open the door, but each time he attempted to withdraw the bolt there was a heavy lurch or push against the door, pressing it so firmly that the bolt would not move until after repeated efforts had been made to unfasten it. Then as the door flew open a thick heavy cloud of smoke burst up from below in a column so dense that the mate and watchman seemed hurled back by its pressure against them.

The door had been opened one second too late for Mr. Phips to make his escape; for as it opened, the fall of a heavy body was heard on the deck beneath. Smothered by the dense smoke, he had been unable to remain any longer on the steps of the companion-way, and had fallen below.

In vain Mr. Watson tried to force his way through the black mass of smoke. The stench and smoke together nearly suffocated him, and, after every effort, he had to seek refuge upon deck.

Urged by a sense of humanity, no less than of duty, we all three tried to pierce the cloud and make our way below, but were as repeatedly driven back by the suffocating vapour.

We shouted “Fire! fire!” and the watchman sprang his rattle. Presently the crews of vessels frozen in like our own who were ashore in the public-houses along the quay rushed forth, while the fire-bells of the city were ringing the alarm. The ill-fated *Atlantic* became the centre of an animated strife between man and the devouring flames.



CHAPTER XLV.

BURNING OF THE "ATLANTIC."

Soon after the companion-way had been opened the smoke became lighter in colour and less dense. Its diminished quantity was easily accounted for by the crackling sound of the burning partitions and furniture.

Three or four men went below, but they were soon driven up by the flames which were spreading rapidly around the cuddy, for they could only remain there long enough to secure the body of Mr. Phips, which they found at the bottom of the steps and brought up with them. The wretched man was apparently dead.

Though the ship was lying in the river, there was no more water to be procured than if she had been lying miles away. Water could only be obtained from wells in the town, or by digging through the ice, which was more than three feet thick on the river.

By the time any adequate supply could be got, the

flames were already bursting up from below, and the firemen soon perceived that in spite of all their efforts, the *Atlantic* was a doomed ship.

In order to make room for the firemen and others more useful than myself, I left the burning vessel and stood on the wharf with hundreds of others watching the burning mass.

Standing near me I saw Captain Forsyth, and as he watched the flames, it struck me that a malignant smile lighted up his features, and that he appeared to behold the destruction of the vessel with no little satisfaction.

He had evidently been drinking all the evening, and had reeled out of a public-house, intoxicated, to witness the fire. Under the excitement of the moment in his present condition he was quite regardless of his remarks, and did not hesitate to express what was uppermost in his mind by exclamations like the following, which were heard by all who were near him. "I thought so," he said; "I knew that ship would never go back but under my command. Who will be the skipper of her to-morrow!" The expression of his face was that of a demon. In the crowd near us several persons were talking about the origin of the fire.

"They say the man is dead," said one.

"Who? What man?" asked another.

"The one that must have set fire to the ship. He did not get out in time, and it serves him right, for he had no business there."

During this conversation I closely watched the captain's face. On learning that the man had perished, a smile of more intense satisfaction spread over his

features, as though in reply to the remark of the last speaker, he had said, "Yes, that's right," and he seemed delighted at learning that Mr. Phips was dead.

Turning partly round, his gaze fell upon me.

"Ah! my lad! I'm glad to see you," he continued, "for you're the only one of the crew who obeyed orders—the only one who should not have been burnt with the ship. Had all attended to their duty like you the *Atlantic* would now be on her way to London instead of burning here."

There was something in the appearance of the man that I did not like, and without thanking him for the good opinion expressed of me, I bade him good-night and turned away.

When the body of Mr. Phips was examined by the surgeon at the inquest, it was found that his neck was broken by the fall from the ladder. It was the general belief that he had intentionally set fire to the ship, and there was no doubt in my own mind of his having been instigated or bribed to do so by Captain Forsyth. Indeed I was almost uncharitable enough to believe that the fear of my perishing in the flames had not the slightest effect in preventing him from committing the crime of arson.

When the crew came down from the forest and were paid off by the agent, Nantuck invited me to go with him to New Bedford to ship in the spring for a whaling voyage.

I did not wish for three or four years' imprisonment in a whaler, and a three years' absence from England and Mary Moody. I would have preferred death to that, and yet I could see no better fate before me by remaining nearer to her or even in my native land.

Those who had been my messmates departed in various directions. They had chosen an occupation with which they were satisfied, and were following it in a sensible manner. I had not yet done so.

The spring of the year would soon return, and the port of Quebec begin to look alive again. Vessels were already taking in lading and being got ready for sea, and high wages were being offered. There was an offer made to me to join the crew of a vessel going to China, and that of another, shipping ice for Calcutta, both of which would leave immediately on the breaking up of the frost.

I had left school with the determination of seeing the world; I was yet young, and had seen but little of it. Why should I not carry out my original intention? This common sense apparently urged me to do, but I would not. The time had arrived for me to decide whether I was to be a common sailor all my days or not. This decision must be made "*now or never*," thought I; and it was made, for I determined to return to England on the first opportunity.

I knew that there were thousands of young men in Europe who, if landed at my age on the shores of British America, would hardly thank Fortune or Fate for another favour, but would fight their way alone, and win all that hope could reasonably desire; but this was not the case with me. I was not like a youth with life before me and everything to win, but like one near the end of an ill-spent life, with hopes blighted and fortune lost. Still some six weeks must be spent ashore before there would be any prospect of a vessel returning to England, and I had to live as best I might, for my money was already all but exhausted.



CHAPTER XLVI.

THE RED INDIAN.

JUST as my fortune was at the lowest, and I scarcely knew where to get a dinner or money to pay for a night's lodging, one of the passengers who came out by the *Atlantic* as an emigrant, and who had been detained at Quebec after landing by severe illness, was anxious to proceed to the Eastern Townships to join his brother, and settle on a farm on the banks of the river Richelieu. In his present state of health, he was fearful of performing a sleigh-journey of some two hundred miles alone, and he made me an offer of accompanying him, undertaking to provide me with the

means of returning to Quebec when the frost should break up.

I willingly accepted the offer, and as the journey was to be made in short stages, the time would be pretty well occupied till I could meet with a vessel returning to England. Mr. Thompson was anxious to start at once, but as the land he had obtained was subject to a kind of quit-rent, payable to the seigneur—a descendant of one of the original French owners of the soil—and some papers had still to be executed, he invited me to share his lodging till we should be ready to start.

This leisure gave me an opportunity of making myself acquainted with the locality, and of obtaining some little knowledge of the inhabitants of what must always be that portion of the American continent which possesses the greatest interest for Englishmen.

The word Canada is derived by some from the two Spanish words *Aca nada* (here nothing), from the supposition that the gold-seekers of that nation were its first discoverers, and finding none of the precious metal in the soil, gave it the name of "Nothing Here." But a more reasonable derivation is the word *Kanatas* of the Iroquois language, which means a collection of huts, and as I have already mentioned that Quebec derives its name from *Këbék* (narrow), in that dialect, it is probable that Jacques Cartier called the country Canada after the name of the village of the aborigines.

The Red Indians still form an important element in the population of the country, which consists of three distinct classes, which do not appear to amalgamate willingly,—the Indian tribes, the French *habitans*, and the British settlers. The Indians, under British

protection, are dispersed in small villages and settlements in various parts of the British American Confederation, and of these the hardiest reside chiefly in Upper Canada, being variously stated to number from 30,000 to 40,000, all belonging to two tribes, the Chippeways or Ojibbeways, and the Mohawks, a subdivision of the Iroquois, at one time the most powerful people in North America. The few Indians in Upper Canada who have embraced Christianity are Protestants for the most part, and their education, as far as reading, writing, and arithmetic are concerned, is carefully attended to.

But comparatively few of the aborigines have embraced Christianity, and even around the stations many are still heathens. This is, no doubt, owing to the occupations of civilisation being unsuitable to their habits of life.

The Indians of Lower Canada are of a much inferior grade, and all but effete as tribes, having dwindled to insignificance in point of numbers. They are for the most part Roman Catholics, whose spiritual concerns are administered by five stipendiary missionaries; but these missionaries discourage all attempts at education, and the exception is to meet with one of those Indians who can read or write.

The young and hale men are habitually idle, fond of big talk about the deeds of their former chiefs and warriors, leaving the tilling of the land, which is still of the rudest description, to the women and old men of the tribe. A few miles north of Quebec we visited one of their settlements called Loretto, a cluster of huts with a church and priest's lodgings. It consists of about fifty acres of land, and the population—a rem-

nant of the once powerful Hurons,—including men women, and children, did not number 200 souls. Poor creatures! they subsist chiefly on the annual Government “present,” on precarious hunting and fishing, and on the sale of mocassins, ornamented with bead-work, at which the women are very clever.

Of the other tribes in Lower Canada there is a small settlement of Algonquins in the vicinity of Trois Rivières. Near St. Francis and Beçancour, on the opposite side of the River St. Lawrence, the Abenakis number some 400. Their villages consist of miserable bark huts, but little better than the old wigwams of savage life. The once mighty Iroquois still number some 2,000 souls, but the tribe is thoroughly despised by the rest of the Indians. Their settlements are further down the river at Sault St. Louis, and Caughnawaga, at St. Regis, and at the Lake of the Two Mountains. In the latter locality are some 400 more Algonquins, and about 800 Nipissings; and of all the Indians of Lower Canada these 700 are the most active, supporting themselves chiefly by trapping and the sale of furs to Europeans, and seeking to maintain themselves by the labour of their hands.



CHAPTER XLVII.

THE FRENCH HABITANS.

THE *habitans* have a kind of copyhold tenure of the land they hold, and when, in 1759, Wolfe's victory at Quebec had made Canada an English colony, they formed almost the entire European population. They then occupied the best lands along the banks of the St. Lawrence, between Quebec and Montreal, and on the

banks of the tributaries of that river, particularly upon the Richelieu, where Mr. Thompson was about to settle. The original grants of land, made by the sovereigns of France, had been in large blocks, chiefly to Court favourites, with whose habits it did not accord to clear and cultivate the land for themselves, covered as it then was with an almost unbroken forest.

The *propriétaires*, as the owners of the soil were called, or *seigneurs*, the name by which they are now known, made over these large blocks, in small parcels called *fiefs*, to such hardworking men as were willing to take the entire risk of cultivation upon themselves, on payment of a small quit-rent, the seigneurs reserving to themselves certain feudal claims—a tithe on fish, mill-dues, and more especially payments on sale or transference, which in some cases amount to one-fifth of the purchase-money; and this was the matter which had now to be settled before Mr. Thompson could have the land on the Richelieu transferred to him.

These *habitans* are thus actually copyhold proprietors of the farms or *fiefs* which they hold, and as a rule, like the yeoman in many of our counties, the *habitan* cultivates the soil with his own hands, aided by the members of his family. They are a contented and happy race, given to hospitality, and most amiable and courteous in their intercourse with British settlers. The farm produces all their requirements—food in abundance—and they make their own soap and candles, and the uncleared land supplies them plentifully with maple-sugar. Tea is almost the only luxury they purchase, and this they drink cold without milk, and most of their cellars have some choice bottles of rum. As for clothing, they grow flax, and the flocks supply

wool, while the spinning-wheel and knitting-needle are found in every homestead.

These are generally built of wood, and only occupy the ground story; but being whitewashed and tolerably commodious, they are by no means uncomfortable dwellings. The kitchen is placed at one end and the sleeping apartments at the other, the centre being reserved for the common or family room, divided in some into two, a sitting and a dining-room. Fruits and vegetables are cultivated by the females of the family, for every homestead has its kale-yard and orchard. Indeed the apple-gathering is one of the great institutions of the country, and neighbours are always invited to assist to peel and string the apples for winter use, which are then hung up to dry as in Normandy, and many a nice pudding or dish of pippins, eaten with pickled pork, or with plain dumplings, gives a relish to the mid-day meal, when frost and snow cover the ground, and vegetables are not attainable.

In personal appearance the *habitans* are almost as dark as the Indians, but the young girls, chiefly brunettes, have the oval face, slightly aquiline nose, bright eyes, good teeth, and glossy locks of the French, and indeed remind one of our own south-coast peasantry. Then, too, as the costume of the *habitans* has but little changed since that of the French peasantry at the close of the last century, one is apt to look upon the scene they animate rather as an episode of the past than an actual existence of the present day.

The men have thin lips, aquiline noses, and small, dark, gleaming eyes. They wear the old-fashioned *capote*, a long-tailed coat reaching down to the feet, generally tied round the waist with a girdle of bright

colours. A straw hat in summer, and a red bonnet in winter, each exposing a long *queue* into which the hair is tied behind, and sometimes fanciful Indian mocassins, complete the costume. The dress of the women is somewhat coquettish. The hair is generally formed into a large *chignon*, and caps are worn in preference to bonnets. The petticoat, often of bright colours, is always strongly contrasted with the *mantelet* or jacket, which hangs gracefully from the shoulders. At church, at balls, and parties, this dress is laid aside, and that which London and Paris fashion-books prescribe is the rule even in the distant provinces.

The few weeks I spent on the Richelieu enables me to bear testimony to the happy state of society, where this French element prevails. During my stay there was a wedding. For miles around everybody was invited and everybody came. The sleigh carioles actually swarmed. At dinner and supper the tables were loaded almost to breaking with huge turkey-pies, joints of beef, mutton, pork, and puddings in endless variety; and the grog which followed was, during the week's festival, such as proved our host no despicable connoisseur in rum. Dancing commenced early and ended late; nor were *the bells* forgotten. The music consisted, as it once did in Merry England, of every discordant sound from kettles and drums, from horns and bells, and stentorian lungs, only to be stilled by a *largesse* from the new married couple.

I never heard a discourteous word from male or female *habitan*. One of the first things taught to a child is to speak the truth and to speak decorously; to bow or curtsy to its elders and to strangers; to relieve the wants of those in distress. I believe them all, old

and young, to be sincere Christians, and though the Sunday is spent as in France, I am very much inclined to think that the social intercourse of that day tends greatly to preserve the primitive manners of these descendants of the original French population, who frequently are found as parents and children for three generations living under the same roof,—the strongest evidence of the mild and friendly temper of the people. Their general conduct is inoffensive and praiseworthy. Personal violence is seldom resorted to, and murder is almost an unknown crime. The doors of the houses, as in many country districts of England, are left open throughout the day; and, though most valuable property is thus left exposed, one seldom hears of theft or robbery. These *habitans*, however, possess a love of litigation, fostered by the cheapness of the law, that, in some measure, is even more to be deprecated than the lawless violence of the “free and independent citizens” of the States. The influx of English settlers, however, who generally look with loathing upon lawyers, is already correcting the evil.



CHAPTER XLVIII.

BRITISH SETTLERS.

CANADA has now been a British possession for more than a century, but Lower Canada, of which I am speaking, is still almost as exclusively in the hands of the French population as it was at the time of the conquest. Upper Canada, on the contrary, is chiefly peopled by

emigrants from the British Isles and their descendants, of which the Irish, who, however, are scattered through both Lower and Upper Canada in considerable numbers, are said of themselves to form a population of some 250,000. These Irish are loyal subjects of Queen Victoria, and the late rowdy Fenian attempt to raise the standard of rebellion in Canada was in no way countenanced by them.

The British settlers in Lower Canada consist for the most part of men of small capital, sufficient to enable them to pay for the transfer of land from the French *habitans*, much of which is either only partially cleared and under cultivation, or still covered with primeval forests, or to purchase uncleared land, not subject to the French Seigniories, from the British American Land Company. These settlers in the Seigniories, like Mr. Thompson, can scarcely be called agriculturists, and it is to the rising generation, the children of such settlers, that the term more properly belongs. Like the *habitans*, these British settlers in Lower Canada make their farms yield all their requirements for food. They make their own soap and candles, and supply their sugar from the maple ; but they have numerous stores for soft goods, situated in the Eastern Townships, from which they obtain almost all the articles of raiment. Tea, as with their French neighbours, is their chief beverage.

The British American Land Company owns the county of Sherbrooke, embracing the greater part of the district of St. Francis, immediately south of Trois Rivières, quite beyond the range of the Seigniories, and it is in this locality that the twenty-nine Eastern Townships are placed. Properly speaking, this is the soil occupied by British settlers, and the portion ad-

joining Stanstead in Montreal already exhibits many features distinctive of British farming, in every way superior to those which are the unmistakable characteristics of the fiefs of the *habitans*. In particular, great attention is given to the breeding of cattle, the cultivation of cereals, and of carrots, and amidst the magnificent scenery, English homesteads, built of stone, are springing up on all sides. Of this locality, Sherbrooke is the county town, and besides places of worship, hotels, stores, and a woollen manufactory, it has several good schools for the education of children of the middle classes, the chief emigrants being of the middling rank of society, or belonging to the labouring classes.

At home in the old country there are many young men in the former of these grades who find it difficult to support themselves in the fields of employment which were open to their fathers. Such of these as possess from £500 to £1000, and have no objection to turn farmer, and to work with their own hands, will find in these Eastern Townships as comfortable a home as an industrious man can ever hope to meet with.

The cultivator of the soil in Canada pays for the perpetual freehold of rich cereal land not more than would be a single year's rental of it in Britain, and the clearing it of timber and bringing it under cultivation will then cost him about twice as much more. That is the whole outlay that he will require—for taxation is merely nominal.

Hired labour is better paid in these Townships than at home. Hence agricultural labourers are in demand, and part of a young man's capital besides that which he expends upon the purchase and clearing of his land

should therefore always be held in reserve. It is calculated that every acre of forest land will cost £4 for clearing, and that a log-hut erected out of the felled timber, of sufficient dimensions and with necessary accommodation, cannot be erected for less than £50.

Mr. Thompson had been in trade in the vicinity of London, and not feeling equal to the task of clearing land for himself, had purchased from one of the *habitués* on the Richelieu a pretty copyhold estate of some 250 acres, fifty of which were still uncleared land, and the homestead on which was a gem of its kind.

The possession of land in a country where land is cheap does not convey with it, as in England, any social rank or dignity. Merchants and storekeepers, who have become wealthy, are always the persons of the greatest consequence in such a colony. Thus it is that the most influential of the British settlers are resident in Quebec and Montreal, devoting themselves to commerce. At the former of these cities, society is quite as gay and polished as in the chief towns of Europe or America; for there is an old French *noblesse*. large landowners, living upon their rentals, a most gentlemanly element, besides a considerable number of British civil and military officers, both of which neutralise the vulgar display of the *nouveaux riches*, which renders colonial life but too frequently unpleasant to persons of cultivated minds in many of our rising colonies.



CHAPTER XLIX.

A SLEIGH RIDE.

THE frost was now very severe, and the ground was hard as solid stone. Mr. Thompson had got his title deeds at last, and it was determined that we should start on our journey the next day. Mr. Thompson purchased one of the small carioles or steel runners, and as the journey was to be made in short stages, he determined also to buy a pony, which he would drive himself. This kind of equipage is kept by all the *habitans* of the Richelieu district to which we were journeying, and instead of travelling by rail to Montreal, he thought it would be more pleasant to cross the river at Trois Rivières, and so become acquainted with the country of his adoption.

It was not till dusk on the second day that we

reached Trois Rivières, our first sleeping-place having been at a friend's house about eight miles on the Quebec side of St. Anne, at which little town we took a solid lunch of turkey-pie to fortify us for the journey. Trois Rivières is a handsome rising town, and has a population of upwards of 6,000 inhabitants. Along the whole line of road we passed the pretty whitewashed cottages of the French settlers, studded so closely together as almost to form one continuous line of farms for several miles. The churches are very picturesque, and the spires being mostly covered with tin, wherever the snow had not completely hidden it, glittered in the sunlight with a most dazzling effect. Indeed in several places, three or four church spires were visible at the same time, so completely have the banks of the St. Lawrence been brought under cultivation by the French population.

Two days later we reached Fort Chambly, and again found comfortable quarters at the house of a French farmer, to whom Mr. Thompson had letters of introduction. The winter is peculiarly the season of festivity in Lower Canada, and our host insisted upon our remaining his guest for a few days, as there was to be a wedding in the neighbourhood to which he had been invited, and at which he wished Mr. Thompson to be present. Indeed, in this land of plenty, it is quite a common occurrence for an invited guest to bring any friends he may have staying with him, without even letting the host know how many additional mouths he will have to provide for. The flour-barrel, the pork tub, and the fowl-house, afford at all times material for meeting such an emergency, and what with soup for which the *habitans* are justly famous, a plenteo

and most relishable meal is soon spread upon the board.

This was the wedding which I mentioned some time ago, and I shall never forget the host of good things and the huge joints of roast and boiled which furnished forth the marriage tables. The bride was a young and pretty brunette, and the bridegroom a tall, well-built man, about ten years her senior, with singularly small, dark, and lively eyes, which I afterwards noticed are here common to most of the men of French extraction. At first it gives them an appearance of low cunning, but this impression is soon effaced when one becomes better acquainted with them.

This wedding-feast was to last for several days, but as Mr. Thompson was now within a short distance of his future home and anxious to take possession of it, we bade our hospitable host adieu before retiring to rest, and started with daybreak the next morning on our journey, reaching St John's, after a pleasant ride of some five-and-twenty miles, in time to join Mr. Thompson's brother at the capital *déjeuner à la fourchette*, for which the *Toison d'Or* is famous on market-days. In the course of the afternoon we arrived at Mr. Thompson's residence, the house having an upper story, like others of the better class in the neighbourhood.

The river Richelieu is crossed by a picturesque wooden bridge at St. John's, from whence there is railway communication to Montreal, and before our parting Mr. Thompson invited me to accompany him and his brother to that city, where the latter had recently opened a soft-goods store in the Rue Notre Dame, a noble street in which the chief buildings are situated.

Amongst these the Roman Catholic Cathedral is the

principal, and is the finest edifice in the place ; indeed the most beautiful Gothic structure in British North America, 256 feet in length, and 135 in width. At an altitude of 120 feet, upon the roof, is an ambulatory 70 feet long and 20 feet wide, commanding a most delightful view of the country. The English cathedral is also a handsome building with a lofty spire. The Hôtel Dieu and its more recent companion, the General Hospital, the College, the Scotch Church, and the Harbour, make up the list of the chief " lions " of the place, which numbers 90,000 inhabitants ; nearly twice as many as Quebec, which the last census gives as containing 51,000 souls.

The purpose of my journey being completed and all my expenses provided for, with money in my pocket, I returned by the railway to Quebec, after an absence of some few weeks. The distance between the two cities is 180 miles.



CHAPTER L.

RETRIBUTION.

EARLY in May, the ice which, according to the law of the province, has to be broken up by the townspeople towards the close of April, had pretty nearly disappeared from the streets, and as the frost was breaking, I determined to get back to England by the first opportunity that should offer. One morning, when on the banks of the river, I met Captain Forsyth. Hastening forward he took my hand, and seemed much pleased to see me.

"I have been wishing to see you for several days," he exclaimed, "not only on my own account, but for your own welfare; for I have employment for you for which you shall be well paid."

I told him that I was not in want of anything to do, and that I was about to ship for England.

"Don't be guilty of any such folly as that," he replied. "Your having an opportunity of leaving a ship here is a piece of good luck that you should make the most of. By coming with me you can earn five

times as much as by joining any ship. I want some one whom I can trust, and I believe you can be depended upon; for a man who tries to do his duty, as I know you have done, may be relied upon at other work as well as that aboard a ship."

"What employment do you wish to engage me for?" I asked.

"As a traveller. I have gone into partnership with an American merchant on the other side of the river. He is to send me goods, and I am to sell them here. We are to remain on opposite sides of the river and take advantage of the ups and downs of the market on both sides; and, don't you see, it will be necessary for two or three persons to assist us in passing to and fro with merchandise? I must employ some one, and as I am not well acquainted with anybody here in whom I have sufficient confidence, I am glad to have met with you. You shall have not less than three pounds a week, and live like a gentleman."

Here was a strong temptation,—one to which I was somewhat inclined to yield. But one reflection prevented me from listening to the full details of the business for which I was required; it was my belief in the captain's complicity in burning the *Atlantic*. He had certainly been pleased at learning that Phips was dead. He was a bad man, and the less I had to do with bad men the better. All I had left in the world now was a little self-respect, and I did not wish to part with that. So I told the captain that I could not listen to the proposal; that I had other plans in view; and was bidding him good day, when he declared that I must assist him for a day or two at least, as he had great need of my aid that very night, and that I could

never have a better opportunity of putting a few pounds into my pocket.

If this offer had been made to me before I had been to Montreal with Mr. Thompson, when I had not a shilling in the world, and was then living at the expense of my landlord, who was every day hoping that I should ship for a voyage and pay him from my advance money, even that condition would not have induced me to accept the captain's offer. After having spent several thousand pounds in the most foolish manner, I would not continue my folly by earning a few pounds by obeying the wishes of a man I disliked—a man I believed to be the worst that had ever crossed my path, the hunter Phil, and Captain Weaver, the wrecker, not excepted. My long-past endeavours to form quick resolves and act upon them were of some use to me now, so I hastened away.

The next day I was fortunate in being able to join a ship about to start for Liverpool. She was lying in the river, between the city and the Isle of Orleans, waiting the arrival of the English mail, the captain being determined not to start until he had received an expected letter from his owners.

The next night I was on an anchor-watch, and was aroused from a long reverie by a disturbance on the river, not far from the ship. There were loud shouts and curses, as though a company of Her Majesty's 40th were having a free fight. "It is only a row between the Custom-house officers and some smugglers," said the officer of the watch. "There's something of the kind going on in this neighbourhood every night, on both sides of the river." The noise continued for about five minutes, and we then heard no more.

Three days after this affair we dropped down the river in the afternoon, on our way to the Gulf. Amongst the numerous articles that found their way on board the ship on the day of our departure was that day's morning paper. This fell into my hands by accident some time afterwards when we were in the Gulf, and the only article of any interest to me which it contained was the report of a coroner's inquest on the body of a person found two days before in the river.

The body was recognised as that of "James Forsyth, late master of the ship *Atlantic*, the vessel recently burnt, and the command of which had been taken from him previous to that calamity for neglect of duty." The account went on to say that Captain Forsyth had been engaged with two tradesmen of the town in smuggling goods from the United States, and that in an affray with the Custom-house officers he had been drowned by the capsizing of a boat.

This, then, was the business upon which the captain had wished to employ me. No doubt he thought from my willingness to obey his absurd order on the day of the wreck that I was a simpleton, and that a young man who had striven to perform so dangerous a duty had been driven to do so by fear of others, and therefore that I should be just such a tool in his hands as he wanted.

My acquaintance with such men as Captain Weaver and Captain Forsyth has convinced me that all offers of friendship and assistance from men we know to be bad can only be looked upon with great suspicion.



CHAPTER LI.

HOMEWARD.

QUEBEC, as viewed from aboard ship at some distance on the voyage towards the Gulf, before reaching the Isle of Orleans, rivals in picturesque beauty any city in the world. The citadel crowns a lofty cliff, while the castle and batteries overhang a range of formidable steepes, with the river below, crowded with shipping of every size, from a frigate to a bark canoe, with huge timber-rafts with a dozen masts and sails, on which are four or more huts for the crew, and merchant vessels in a continual changing panorama. The Fall of Montmorenci dashes its white foam almost to the clouds, and on each side of the river is a long range of beautiful and fertile shore.

The town itself is no less picturesque, with fine old stone houses, partly roofed with tin, narrow streets and quaint gates, and, though the public buildings have not much pretension to architectural beauty, they add to the interest of the scene from the acquired tone which age has given them, and the associations they conjure up. It is a fine old-looking town, and has somewhat of the appearance of a city transplanted bodily from the Old

World to the New. Streets running up precipices, make the footing very insecure in winter, for the surface can then only be compared to a sheet of glass; so carpet-boots, spiked goloshes, and iron-pointed walking-sticks are absolute necessities.

I am not an enthusiast in such matters, and have no desire to enumerate the public buildings and institutions of the place, which any guide-book will furnish far more accurately than I can do, but there is one scene, that has taken so strong a hold on my memory that I will try to describe it in a few words.

The market is held every day,—Saturday, of course, being the busiest. The spot upon which it is held is 250 feet long, varying in width, but at the widest part having a breadth of 165 feet. There is a large building with stalls in the centre, but the chief business is transacted on the open ground. Provisions of all kinds, excepting fish, which is chiefly brought by land from Boston, are plentiful and cheap; but it is the motley crowd and the Babel of tongues that give life and animation to the place.

There is a crowd of carts in summer or of sleighs in winter, with the produce of the surrounding country—in winter mostly hay, wood, and frozen provisions, in which state they keep good for months—around which are congregated men, women, and children, French, English, and Irish, and Indian squaws, all vociferating and wrangling in their native tongues, or in broken French or English. Then amidst the buyers are the resident gentry, and the officers and soldiers of the garrison, with here and there sailors from the shipping in the harbour, out on “the spree,” and determined to have a lark, full of mischief and fun. If any one wishes to

form an idea of the confusion of tongues at the building of the Tower of Babel, Saturday in the market-place of Quebec is the study to satisfy him.

It is somewhat singular that wood for fuel should be so immoderately dear at Quebec, because there can be no scarcity, seeing the immense rafts which are always coming down the St. Lawrence and Charles rivers; but in winter time both wood and hay, the staple commodities of the season, are often so dear as to be almost beyond the means of the poorer classes who dwell in the lower town,—for Quebec, like our own Modern Athens, consists of two distinct towns, both as regards the situation and the inhabitants.

In the lower town, which strongly resembles the “old town” of Edinburgh, and is proverbially “snug and dirty,” is the abode of commerce, of handicraft, and of the men employed about the navy. The upper town, distinguished no less proverbially as “cold and lofty,” is the seat of government and the principal residence of the military. Wood fires are kept burning both night and day in the houses of those who can afford the luxury, but as “coals are coals” in London, “wood is wood” in Quebec.

Yet, when the weather is open, immense timber-rafts are continually passing down the rivers to the Timber Dépôt; but as this timber is chiefly for shipment to Europe the inhabitants derive little or no benefit from the glut, and it is only when the river is completely frozen over and communication easy with the opposite shore, that fuel in winter falls in value. A line is then marked with beacons, across which hay, firewood, and other bulky goods are conveyed abundantly and at reduced prices; but this is an

advantage which only occurs occasionally, and it was solely owing to the severity of the frost during my stay at Quebec that I became acquainted with the fact. Indeed, in the neighbourhood of the city, the snow lay to the depth of six or seven feet, and from the heights of Abraham the eye rested upon a boundless plain of dazzling white,—all the fences, boundaries, and copse woods being completely buried in the snow; the tops of villages, and scattered farm-houses, and dark lines of pine wood, or the masts of ice-bound vessels alone rising above the level. Warmth then becomes one of the greatest luxuries of life, and the consumption of firewood is consequently very large, so with such facilities as the rafts could be made to afford with proper management during the summer, steps might surely be adopted which would place a cheap supply of firewood within the reach of the poor during the severity of these Canadian winters.

We dropped quietly down to the Gulf, and, with the exception of speaking ships by the way, and dodging large floating masses of ice, the greatest peril of the voyage, we reached Liverpool without any incident worth recording.

Our lading consisted entirely of Canadian wheat, and the owners of the vessel, in the letter the captain was waiting for when I joined the ship at Quebec, had desired him to make as quick a passage as possible, as they were fearing a fall in prices.

The crew, captain and officers as well as the men, were all English, and the cheerful obedience of the men was due to the kind treatment they received from the former. This was so different to what I had hitherto experienced that our homeward voyage has left many a pleasurable recollection to dwell upon.



CHAPTER LII.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

ON bidding me farewell at Montreal Mr. Thompson had placed a ten-pound note in my hand, besides some sovereigns to pay my travelling expenses. That ten-pound note I still had, and on being paid off in Liverpool I received between four and five pounds in addition, for my pay, so I resolved to start at once for London.

My visiting the metropolis again was a great risk to run, but I was ready to brave any danger with the hope of seeing Mary Moody once more. On the evening of the day we were paid off, I was strolling through the streets of Liverpool, intending to take the earliest up-train to town in the morning. While sauntering along I was accosted by two of my late

shipmates, who had been all the afternoon spending the money they had received that morning in drinking and smoking.

They insisted upon my going in somewhere and having a parting glass with them. I was obliged to accept the invitation, or part with them in anger, and I did not like to do that; so we entered a beer-shop filled with navvies, who were employed in the construction of a branch line of railway then in progress. They were a strong-limbed, rude, half-civilized set of beings, whose Lancashire dialect we could hardly understand.

One of them, who appeared to be the Mr. Merryman of the party, aspired to amuse his companions by "chaffing" the two drunken sailors.

There would have been but little harm in this had the man been able to suffer a defeat in a war of words without losing his temper, but he could not. In wordy warfare he was no match for either of the sailors, although they were half stupid with drink.

During the conversation between them, one of the sailors asked the navvy, if his mother was not very fond of children.

"Ay mon, that she wur," replied "Lancs," with a wink to his companions.

"I thought so," said Jack; "for if not she would certainly have drowned you along with the first batch of kittens."

Of what transpired for several minutes after this remark I have but a very dim recollection. Large bony fists and heavy iron-shod boots were flying about the room in all directions.

I was knocked down and kicked until insensible, and on once more becoming conscious I found that

I had been brought round by having a jug of water thrown over me. The navvies were gone, and so was my purse with the ten-pound note and the sovereigns which it contained.

All the money I had remaining was but a few shillings—not enough to pay my fare to London. There was no alternative but to seek and find an opportunity of working my passage by water. In this I succeeded.

We reached London one Saturday night, and early the next morning I started for the residence of Mrs. Moody. The church bells were ringing as I reached the spot, and presently I saw the object of my early and only love come from the door and take the way to Chiswick Church.

She was alive and living with her mother, and therefore still unmarried. To be certain of this was worth the journey I had taken across the ocean. To stand by the corner of the road, hiding behind some fine old limes from her view, and watch her enter the house of prayer, was at least some reward for months of toil and hardship. So I thought then, and did not complain of Fortune, for I had only myself to blame, and had learnt to know that such was the fact.

Three days after this I was again wandering penniless about the neighbourhood of the London Docks, each hour thinking less of other troubles while under the greater one of trying to learn where I should get a dinner; for I had not broken my fast since a very scanty breakfast on the previous day.

Every happy occurrence always takes me by surprise; it comes when least expected. But never was I more surprised than on again meeting an old ac-

quaintance, and one whom I had long been anxious but never again expected to see. It was Robinson, the ship's-carpenter, whom I had left in Florida.

"What are you dying for?" he exclaimed, after nearly wringing one of my hands off. I was hungry and weak, and instead of replying in words, could only return the shake of the hand, and nod. "Come, wake up, Fred," he continued, "what ails you? You look more like a ghost than a human being."

The palpitation of my heart, which the sudden surprise had brought on, had ceased. In a few words I explained to him my altered position and prospects.

"Don't be downcast, Fred," he said; "I am in lodgings close by. Come along with me, you shall share them till something better turns up."

How wonderful was the change that came over me within an hour. Refreshed with kind words and food, I seemed a new being. Hope told me that I might still become worthy of Mary Moody, now that I could render myself useful in the way that Robinson proposed to employ me. From him I learned that Captain Weaver, the wrecker, had been taken into custody with his whole gang on the coffee plantation, and, after being tried for piracy, had been sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour in the State Prison.

Robinson had quitted Florida on the eve of the disruption of the United States. He had made a little money and did not wish to risk the loss of it. He was now in business, he told me, at Millwall, was in want of a clerk, and at once offered me the berth. "It will not be worth your while, Fred," he said, "to look to it as a permanent thing, but we will talk about it presently, after I have taken you to see

another old friend, to whom I was going when your apparition stopped me."

We left his lodgings and proceeded along "St. George's-in-the-East," talking of our adventures in Florida after the wreck of the vessel in which we had sailed from London five years ago. He took my arm and we started up the street.

Some persons might have worried my companion during the walk for the name of the old acquaintance he was taking me to see. I did not; it was evident by his manner that he intended to give me an agreeable surprise, and in fact I was glad that he did not tell me, for I have ever had a little pleasure in "waiting for the birth of Fate."

"Do you remember Tony, the Maltese sailor?" asked Robinson, "who was saved with us when wrecked on the Keys?"

"Assuredly I do; he saved my life,—a thing not likely to be forgotten," answered I. "Are we going to see him?"

"No, we shall never see Tony again: he is dead. He was drowned here in the river about six months ago. He jumped into the water to save two lads who had upset a small boat, when both of them seized hold of him, and left him no chance to save them or himself. All three were drowned. Poor Tony! he was a brave fellow. He was followed to the grave by men from almost every vessel in the Docks. I acted as chief mourner, having been an old shipmate, and another, to whom Tony had been a good friend, wept like a child as he walked beside me. But from him you will hear more of Tony when we reach his dwelling."



CHAPTER LIII.

PROSPECTS BRIGHTEN.

TURNING out of the direct thoroughfare into a street leading down by the outer wall of the Docks, Robinson opened the door of a barber's shop, and I followed him into it. There, dressed out in all the foppery of his race, was "Yellow Jake," who met me with genuine manifestations of joy and pleasure.

"God bless you, master Fred!" he exclaimed, "I've always hoped I might see you again, and here you are."

Jake, whose language was always superior to that of the negroes, told me that he was the owner of the shop we were in, that he had escaped from New Orleans

in an English vessel, through Tony's connivance; had worked his way to London, where he found no difficulty in getting employment; and that he had no reason to complain of Fortune now that he had settled down for good.

"I came in here one morning for a shave," said Robinson, addressing me, "and after this chap had got my face partly shaved he recognised me. It was more than five minutes before I could get him to go on with his work. He turned my head about as if it had been screwed on my neck, till he was satisfied that it was not a barber's block but a live head."

Robinson sent for some ale, and as we sat in Jake's little back parlour he informed me that he had brought from America a little more than two thousand pounds, and that he was in partnership with a friend in the business of rigging and repairing ships.

"We have between thirty and forty men in the yard," he continued, "and as neither of us knows anything about book-keeping, our accounts are getting into a regular muddle. We want some one to put them all square. Do this for us until you can get something better. It will not hurt you, and it will help us out of a bother."

This offer, so delicately and kindly put, was gladly accepted, and the next day found me hard at work posting up the accounts, and balancing the cash of the rising firm of Robinson and White. Robinson, without my asking, advanced me some money for present expenses, and I took lodgings in the same house in which he had located himself. In a few weeks I was able to repay the advance he had made me, and had money of my own in my pocket. I was

no longer ashamed to be seen by my acquaintances, and I went to call upon Mrs. Moody.

Mary met me with genuine unconcealed emotions of joy. She was more beautiful than ever, and had only returned from Tunbridge Wells a week or two before, as Mrs. Moody's health required her to winter out of London after their return from Eastbourne in November, so that immediately after Christmas they had again left town. Mary's sojourn in Sussex, surrounded by so many records of the past, Pevensey Castle, Hurstmonceaux, and Tunbridge, Lewes, Hastings, Battle Abbey, Winchelsea, and Rye, and the fine primeval rocks at the Wells, all led her to study the history of England with great diligence, and her conversation showed how much she had enjoyed the study of the past in the very localities in which such stirring scenes themselves had been enacted.

I need not say how much I now regretted the time I had idled away in the pursuit of a Will-of-the-wisp—a knowledge of mankind without the aid of books. Mary asked for information on many points in which she took interest, of which I was completely ignorant, and all of which I felt that any man of education would, readily, have answered; so that I could not but confess to myself that it would have been better, in the first instance, had I submitted to the discipline of the school from which I had run away, and continued my studies there till such time as I might have quitted it for Cambridge, as had always been my father's intention, whose wish it was that I should go to the Bar.

The moment I reached my lodgings I put down on paper all the questions that Mary had asked me which I had not been able to reply to. I knew

nothing of Roman tiles, as little of the various styles of architecture, and was profoundly ignorant of the distinctive characteristics of Roman and British castrametation, so that I could not tell her, from her description, whether any particular earth-work on the South coast was due to the former or the latter, and yet this was just the information she could not readily glean from books, and which her visit to the Sussex coast had made her so desirous of obtaining.

I determined to procure a ticket to the Reading-Room of the British Museum, and to devote any spare time I might have, during the hours of admission, to careful study; and that resolve I immediately carried out, so that I felt that my attachment to Mary Moody had again exercised a most beneficial influence over the future of my life.

Two months had passed since I had entered upon my new duties, and I had become steady and industrious. I indulged in no dissipation, and acquired the invaluable habit of early rising in the morning. The memory of the sufferings endured when homeless and penniless was ever present when the slightest inclination arose for indulging in the propensities and habits that might again bring me to the same misery. There was nothing in my conduct that Uncle John would now condemn, and had he been aware of the resolution I had taken, and of the firmness with which it was kept, he might no longer have thought it impossible even for me to become a plodding and hard-working lawyer.

One evening, at Mrs. Moody's, I met my old acquaintance, the "Own Correspondent" of the popular penny morning paper. He was anxious to know with

what success I had met in the disposal of my manuscript.

"There was no success about it," I replied. "I hawked it about to every penny periodical in London, and none of them would have it."

"Is there enough of it for three volumes?" he asked. "If so, take it to some respectable book-publisher. A tale that will not suit the penny serials may make a good circulating library novel."

This advice I determined to follow, and the next day I took my book to an eminent publisher. I was ushered into the gentleman's private room, and he listened to what I had to say with kindness and consideration. When I had finished, he promised that I should have an answer in a fortnight from that day, making a memorandum to that effect in his diary.

I continued to keep the books of Messrs. Robinson and White, and restricted my calls upon Mary and her mother to evening visits after business hours, taking the opportunity of the one o'clock dinner-hour to have a little chat with my old friend Jake occasionally, excepting half a day on Wednesdays and Saturdays, which I spent at the British Museum.

Upon one subject I was quite happy. Whatever circumstances might transpire in the future, I had no longer a fear of being an aimless wanderer, merely living for the present. I had learned to value the greatest of all earthly blessings,—content, and business habits had cured me of all inclination for rambling. Rather than live in the idle manner in which the past had been spent, I would have preferred entering "Yellow Jake's" shop, and working as an assistant.

I now gained a name amongst my new acquaint-

ance as an industrious, temperate, and persevering young man, who was determined to do the best for himself and others.

The wild dreams of my youth were over, and I was fully awakened to the fact that success in this world demands some other exertion than the creations of idle fancies. I no longer foolishly trusted to myself alone, but sought, in hopeful reliance, for aid and counsel for my daily guidance from above, and a blessing seemed to rest upon my work. I was happy in the new phase of life which had been opened up to me, and felt conscious that in due time I should prove to my uncle that his opinion of me had been too hastily and erroneously formed.

Should my novel be accepted, I determined to seek for other literary occupation, but I would wait the result before I again attempted to write a book. Besides, I was desirous of forming my style upon the best models in the language, and was devoting my Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Museum to a course of prose reading. Defoe, Cobbett, Charles Lamb, Southey, and Macaulay were my favourites; but Addison, Johnson, and Gibbon, also possessed a fascination for me nearly as great. The more I read of these authors, the more I felt how thoroughly slipshod is the great mass of writing of the day, few authors seeming to recognise that prose demands a rhythm no less than poetry, though of a totally different form, and, as a rule, making little or no distinction between the spoken and the written language in which to clothe their ideas.



CHAPTER LIV.

NEGRO ASPIRATIONS.

JAKE'S shop was a favourite resort of the mulattoes who are employed on board ships in West Indian and South American trade, generally petty officers, seamen, or, chiefly, as cooks; Robinson, who was a keen observer of life, told me that it was as quite as good as a play to listen to the discussion they indulged in on the prospect of the war, which had then just broken out between Federal and Confederate States.

Many of these men were runaway slaves from Southern States, like Jake, and their recollection of slavery, its barbarities and hardships, had embittered them greatly against their former masters, so that as a rule, all their leanings were towards the Federal Government, who were, so to say, fighting for negro emancipation.

The mulattoes, who for the most part can read

write, may be said to have formed the negro aristocracy of the Southern States previous to the emancipation of the whole race on the conclusion of the war. Not that they were looked upon as being any less chattels than other slaves, but in many cases they had been treated more kindly in childhood than the young black negro offspring of the same mother; had been playmates of the white children on the plantation, and shared in such instructions as were attainable without the necessity of teaching them to read or write—vital branches of knowledge, however, often imparted to them by their playmates themselves.

Where colour is, as it then was in the Southern States, the sole qualification for the franchise, and colour alone free from the remotest affinity to black is recognised as white, and only in enjoyment of civil rights, just as Brummagem jewels pass current with those who know no better, the mulatto, when dressed in a little brief authority on a plantation, almost invariably became a grotesque representation of the white man, aping all his vices, and ridiculously vain of his own dress and swagger.

It was from this frivolous class of persons that the men who nightly assembled in Jake's little parlour had sprung; but, as most of them had emancipated themselves from slavery and this frivolity at the same time, by running away from their masters, the many hardships they had had to endure, and the constant vigilance they had had to exercise to avoid recapture till they were placed beyond danger, had so completely sobered them, that when any remains of these former habits cropped up, as they would sometimes do, they were the more amusing from the very contrast.

Jake himself was a remarkable instance of the facility with which these men acquire knowledge. For purposes of his own, probably solely to enhance the price of the chattel, Captain Weaver had made Jake a tolerable adept at the keeping of ships' accounts, and the latter was now assiduously learning from Robinson the admeasurement of timber in the rough, the weight of iron in bulk, and other similar methods of calculation, of which to avail himself, should an opportunity offer, no one would know better how than Jake.

By the ships arriving at the docks a constant supply of American papers was always finding its way into Jake's parlour, and the nightly discussion of their contents by the party usually assembled there was a natural consequence.

On some one or two occasions when I was present, I was astonished at the sound views of the speakers as to what should form the true aspirations of the negro race should victory ultimately crown the cause of the Federals, and bring about the emancipation of the slave.

"I am no advocate," said Jake on one occasion, "for an immediate equality of 'political rights,' as these Yankee papers call their ballot-box. Give the negro a fair field and a fair trial for his labour. There is no real freedom in a country where labour is not free. Free labour alone makes a people generous, secure, and lasting.

"I quite agree with you," replied one of the guests. "Ignorant negroes, as the republicans of Liberia call those who cannot pass the school-examination of the State, have no vote in that negro settlement; and

until universal education has thoroughly paved the way, universal suffrage can only be a sham or a scourge in the Confederate States."

"Look," said Jake, "at the male population returns of South Carolina, for instance, where I was reared; the coloured men outnumber the white by some 200,000, and the latter, as the owners of all the soil, pay all the taxes, so that a mere manhood-right would be one of the most cruel and unjust enactments, if not carefully qualified in some way or other. No, I am sure, universal suffrage is not the want of the black population. Liberty to go and sell their labour to whomsoever they like, and to pocket the proceeds, is almost the only boon they need at first. Let no one, as in Massachusetts, have a vote who cannot read and write."

"True," replied the other, "liberty to go where a man lists, to say what a man thinks, and to retain what is a man's own, coupled with respect for the rights of others, is, perhaps, the best definition of liberty that can be given."

"One great thing must not be lost sight of," said Jake. "Good schools are the first necessity; good schools for adults as well as for children; and to be good schools for the coloured population they must, for years to come, be good schools for the coloured population exclusively."

"I have been listening attentively," said an old man seated in the corner of the room, "and should like to see such a result. But the planter will try to hold his own against all comers, and when the war is over it will be only from the utter exhaustion of one party or the other, with many million mouths to fill

and very little to do it with. These convulsions weigh heavily upon commerce, the great civilizer of mankind, and the sole source of income in these States, which grow cotton for all the world and not for their own wants, without a market for which they would be bankrupt at the close of the war, while their customers will be sure to procure the raw material from other sources, or find out some substitute for it. Nobody can foretell what the end of such a war may be.

“Let us hope it will not be anarchy, to end in the extermination of the negro race as a part of the population of those States; for let the end be what it may, North and South can never for years to come be reconciled as one people, and the questions will arise, ‘What is to become of the negro?’ ‘who is to feed him?’ ‘who to educate him?’ These questions must have satisfactory answers, for there will be four million paupers thrown on the country at once should the North succeed and President Lincoln declare a general emancipation from slavery.”

The war is over, the seceding States are conquered, and have admitted their helplessness by complete submission. What their sufferings may have been the decrease of the adult male white population since 1860 will show. In the census of that year these States numbered 968,606 white and 710,572 coloured adult males. The registration in 1867 shows a decrease in the former of 338,307, and of only 39,466 in the latter, which now gives the coloured population a majority of 40,807 voters, as, upon the emancipation of the slaves, full civil rights were accorded to them. Thus they are, in a measure, politically omnipotent

over the race that formerly owned them, a truth which the registration just referred to fully bears out. In Alabama the coloured majority is 15,890 ; in Florida, 4,286 ; in Louisiana, 86,232 ; in Mississippi, 14,657 ; and in South Carolina, 83,276 ; while the only Southern States which have a majority of white voters are Arkansas, 11,840 ; Georgia, 1,845 ; North Carolina, 81,408 ; Texas, 9,286 ; and Virginia, 12,210. There are thus in all 671,106 coloured voters in these States to 680,299 white, showing the majority given above of 40,807 coloured adult males on the registration of the past year.



CHAPTER LV.

FORTUNE CONTINUES KIND.

IN due course I received a note asking me to call upon the gentleman to whom I had entrusted my manuscript. He told me that he had placed my work in the hands of a careful reader, who had returned it the day before with an opinion that was favourable on the whole. "He tells me," he continued, "that your story is evidently the work of a novice, but that there is much originality in the plot and in the manner of its development. It wants, however, the careful revision of a more experienced hand before it will take with the public. Much will have to be cut out, and some passages must be re-written. The

matter, however, is good, and, as a first essay, the tale deserves every encouragement. Under these circumstances, I did not wish to reject your work without making you an offer. How much do you expect for it?"

I stated that I would rather leave that matter in his hands, my chief object being now to get the book into print.

He offered me fifty pounds for the copyright, which he told me was as large a sum as he could name for the work of an untried author, and added, that if I were satisfied, the book would make its appearance in three volumes during the present season.

Of course this offer was gladly accepted, and I left the house the proudest man in London.

A few months before, I thought so little of fifty pounds that the sum might have been squandered by me in a week without the slightest regret, but it seemed worth a fortune to me now, for I had earned it by legitimate labour. It was something more than money. It was an earnest that fame, and even fortune, might possibly follow, however slowly.

I had now a stronger hope of making myself worthy of Mary, and another hope that was nearly as dear though inspired by an opposite spirit. I would let Uncle John know that I was not the fool he had ever supposed me to be. I wished him to have a pride in calling me his nephew. It would be the noblest revenge I could take to let him feel that I had banished the recollection of all his unfair dealing towards me, and had forgiven it.

Although highly elated with the prospect of soon having my name appear in print before the public,

under the fostering care of so eminent a publisher, I determined to let nothing interfere with my duties in the counting-house of Messrs. Robinson and White. On the contrary, I resolved to retain that situation, and to make literature, at all events for a time, more a pleasure than a calling. The lesson I had received in the past prevented me from indulging in any of the follies by which that lesson had been given. But as my hours in the counting-house were only from ten to three o'clock, I had plenty of time to follow out this plan, and I commenced at once another work of fiction.

A month had scarcely passed before my novel made its appearance. The reviews were such as to flatter the vanity of any young writer. Indeed, they were more than favourable; and when I called on the publisher, that gentleman seemed pleased to meet me, and, shaking my hand warmly, he congratulated me on my success.

Before leaving, he requested me to let him have the refusal of the novel I was then engaged upon, adding, with a pleasant smile, that I should find him a liberal buyer.

The reviewers refrained from all that kind of wholesale general penny-a-line praise which is never accorded but to the dullest mediocrity. Mine was not "the best novel of the season," nor was it "a tale which will be eagerly devoured by all novel readers." Not a single review, however lavish in its praise, but had something to suggest to "an author, who, evidently but young in the craft, gave much promise of the future."

The circle of my literary acquaintances now rapidly

extended, and an application being made to me to write a serial tale for one of the leading monthly magazines, which I accepted, I had now full occupation. Besides, I was regularly engaged on the staff of a London literary paper, as one of the reviewers, a labour which was much to my liking.

I called upon Mrs. Moody, and found her and Mary on the point of going up the river to enjoy a stroll in Richmond Park. Mary was proud of my success, and now for the first time I related to her and to her mother the full particulars of my follies in the past, and placed before them all my hopes of the future.

Conscience told me that I was asking very much of any woman when requesting her to entrust the happiness of a daughter to one who had been guilty of so many acts of folly; but I felt confident now of my own strength, and did all in my power to inspire others with the same opinion.

I had resolved to make Mary Moody my wife, and, acting upon my old axiom of "*now or never*," having already obtained Mary's consent to do so, I asked her hand of Mrs. Moody in due form.

Although that lady did not explicitly say so, I could not fail to gather from her reply, that she might have wished her daughter to do better than to marry me. However, she concluded by stating that she could not stand in the way of Mary's happiness, and would give her to me with the hope that I should prove worthy of the girl whose welfare had long been her only care.

I had mentioned my uncle's name frequently in the narrative of my boyish follies. She spoke in the highest terms of him. He had been, she said,

the friend of her late husband almost from his entrance into life, and she added that it was chiefly from the similarity of the name that she had originally felt a desire to cultivate my acquaintance.

After all, when I came to consider carefully what had been my uncle's conduct towards me, though I could not divest myself of the feeling that he had taken an unfair advantage of my ignorance and folly to enrich himself at my cost, I was forced to acknowledge that had he not treated me as he had done, I should never have thought of doing anything to earn my own living as long as he continued to supply me with money.



CHAPTER LVI.

CONCLUSION.

It was arranged that the wedding should take place with as little delay as possible. Considerable property would come to Mary on the death of her mother, and that property her father had tied up in what the lawyers call "a long trust," so that it needed no marriage settlement to secure it from her husband's creditors, should he become involved in difficulties. But there was a large sum recently inherited by Mrs. Moody which was also settled on Mary, and which would at the same period come within her husband's control, unless secured by a marriage settlement.

The family solicitor was employed to prepare the document, and the evening before the day fixed for our union it was to be executed. We were all assembled at the villa, waiting for his arrival, when a servant announced the name of the gentleman, and I gave so low a voice that I did not hear it distinctly.

Judge of my astonishment when I saw Uncle John ushered into the room, having his official blue book in his hand. There was a pleasant smile on his countenance as he greeted me, adding to that effect half-audibly to all, "So, Master Fred, after all you are going to marry a ward of mine, whom you have never heard of, and to share with her the property which her Uncle Banks's will bequeathed to her at the death of her mother, which had no effect for you then."

Here, then, was the mystery solved. Mrs. Banks was the client whose daughter Uncle John had proposed to me for a wife, and whom my loyalty to my father had forbidden me to see. The writings were signed, executed and attested, and after a stroll round the garden, Uncle John and I returned by the usual way to town.

It was one of those bright sunny mornings in the early part of November which are the frequent precursors of winter when I reached Chiswick to await the arrival of Mary with her bride and the party from the villa. Uncle John gave away, and as he did so, I could see in his expression of quiet triumph at the thought of his nephew taking a wife, I was acting according to duty, though I had once refused, positively, to do so. After the ceremony, the whole party assembled

the villa, and at the breakfast Uncle John proposed the health of "Mr. and Mrs. Lonsdale," which was responded to by all present most enthusiastically, with all the honours. The reason I had never met my uncle when visiting Mrs. Moody and Mary was explained. Learning that they were acquainted with me when he told them of the evidence I had given about the death of Banks, Uncle John had requested them to say nothing to me about him, and his wishes had been complied with. He desired to try me to the utmost before he would give his consent to my marriage with his ward, to whom he had been appointed guardian under her father's will. He had watched me, and never lost sight of me during the struggle which cost me so much anguish, and, as he told me, like gold purified by fire, he hoped I was now a wiser man.

"I hope, Fred," he added, "that you will believe that I never intended to rob you, or to charge you one penny of interest on your own money. I have only been trying to teach you a little common sense, and costly as has been the experiment, I have some reason to believe that I may have succeeded if you only go on as you have now begun. I am quite pleased with your conduct for the last five or six months. There is still five thousand pounds of your money in the Funds, and when you return from your wedding-trip, it shall be transferred to your name. Have I not done well to save some of it until you knew its value? You will want lots of money for travelling expenses when you have a young bride for a companion, so you must humour me by accepting

this pocket-book, in which you will find a wedding gift from me towards the expenses."

Uncle John had treated me as I merited, as a self-willed, headstrong boy, and all feeling of resentment, for which there had never been any real cause, vanished at once. Besides, Uncle John had always run all the risk of losing his money; for had I pleaded my minority, the law would not compel me to repay the advances made, but would compel him to pay over to me the entire trust-money on my becoming of age.

"You see, Fred," he continued, "I have no relative but you, who must some time have all my money, and I was willing that you should spend some of your own, and learn something of poverty, so that you will know how to take care of mine when you get it."

Years have passed since that morning, the happiness of which has not been darkened by one cloud of care. We are living within a short distance of the villa, and Mary and her mother seldom pass a day without seeing one another. Uncle John has long ago given up business, and is a frequent guest at our cottage, where he delights to worry my young Scotch gardener by insisting upon pruning the wall-fruit trees, invariably cutting away the fruit-bearing branches, and allowing the trees to make wood, instead of fruit for the table. I often visit Robinson and Jake, and pass a pleasant hour or two in their society. They are always welcome guests when they are tempted up the river to Chiswick.

Two girls and a boy are playing on the lawn that leads down to the river while I am writing this, and their mother is seated at the open window by my side, twisting and fashioning Berlin wools into a mysterious

garment which is intended for some one of us, but she keeps the secret so well that it will only be known when, most unexpectedly, the article itself is placed in the hand of the happy recipient. "*Now or never*" is still my favourite motto, but not to be hastily acted upon, and in thought and act I have long since felt the wisdom of submitting my own will cheerfully to His, without Whose blessing human thought and intellect are, at best, but vanity and folly.

THE END.



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